

WILD WESTERN SCENES;



OR,

THE WHITE SPIRIT OF THE WILDERNESS.

BEING A

NARRATIVE OF ADVENTURES, EMBRACING THE SAME
CHARACTERS PORTRAYED IN THE ORIGINAL "WILD
WESTERN SCENES," OVER ONE HUNDRED EDITIONS OF
WHICH HAVE BEEN SOLD IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

By J. B. JONES,
AUTHOR OF THE FIRST SERIES OF "WILD WESTERN SCENES."

[NEW SERIES.]

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WILD WESTERN SCENES.

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL AT HAPPY VALLEY—A HOUSE BUILT—THE PALISADE COMPLETED.

At one of the sources of the Arkansas River—an inconsiderable stream of limpid water, coming fresh and pure from the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains—a thousand miles beyond the permanent habitations of the anglo-saxon race on the western continent, an abode had been established by the little party whose adventures are narrated in the ensuing pages.

The delta in which the settlement was located, had been accidentally discovered; and it was in the vicinity of one of the hitherto unexplored arid and desert regions, where the gloom of desolation still abides, and where neither man nor beast may ever find the means of subsistence.

But the delta itself was an oasis in the desert. When the eyes of the devoted pioneer first rested on it, and as he gazed westward from a lofty mound, he lifted up his hands and pronounced it "The Happy Valley." Standing as yet afar off, he dismissed the faithful band of savages which had guided and guarded the party for many weeks, and even months, in the wilderness.

In the dim distance, the huge mountain reared aloft its dark majestic brow, indistinctly seen over the intervening forest which shaded the translucent stream, as it brawled into the happy valley, where all was peace and tranquility. But even the tops of the lofty trees which surrounded the delta, and fringed the natural embankments of the alluvial tract, teeming with luxuriant vegetation, seemed, in the distance, to the weary traveller, as patches of dwarfed shrubbery, repulsing rather than inviting the approach of weary

wanderers. It was by means of his telescope, that the leader of the party had distinguished them from the illusory landscapes of the mirage; and when he had drawn near enough to obtain a view of the valley, he felt convinced that his journey was completed, and that he had found a refuge, which if not inaccessible to others of his race, was at least one not likely to be discovered by idle intruders.

The delta, or rich level land of Happy Valley, was a thousand yards in diameter, and the location in the centre, selected for the erection of buildings, was beyond the reach of arrows from the shelving and timbered embankments surrounding it on every hand, rather as natural defences than as menacing positions for the assaults of an enemy. At the upper or western end of the delta, the stream from the mountain was parted by an immense pile of rocks, and flowed to the right and the left around the rich tract, constituting it a green island, and united again at the lower end of the luxuriant area, where it rushed leaping and foaming, between perpendicular rocky embankments, after which it fell into a small and placid lake beyond.

The materials for the buildings were abundantly supplied by a tower of rock and mica, left standing in the midst of the area by the convulsions of nature, and which had been worn smooth and round by the torrents that had evidently assailed it at a former period. At the base of this isolated deposit the party had pitched their tents, in a small grove of persimmon trees, and without hesitation or further delay, proceeded to erect the necessary houses for their abode.

The party consisted of five white men and two white females, one beautiful Indian woman, and two white children; the remainder were very black negro slaves, ten in number, including men, women and children. Having several wagons, drawn by horses, and mules and oxen, they were not only provided with the necessary implements of labor, but had a store of cereal provisions for their maintenance during the ensuing winter, and until they could reap the products of their first harvest in the wilderness.

The old tower was mostly demolished, and in its stead there arose

a substantial mansion impervious to attack. It consisted of a centre building, thirty-five feet square, with wings of symmetrical but of smaller dimensions. The wings were two stories high, while the centre or main building had a third story, and was surmounted by a round tower, resembling in some respects, while divested of its irregular massive solidity, the one which had been placed there by nature. Altogether there were twenty rooms in the building, besides the hall of entrance. These, it is true, were mostly of rude construction, although the soft rock easily yielded to the workmen ; but several were of better finish, and smoothly plastered with the snowy lime made in the vicinity. The isinglass or mica, of perfect transparency, sufficed for the windows, and the slate found at the cliffs covered the roof. Finally, their habitation, after the incessant labor of many weeks, was in a sufficient state of preparation for their occupancy, and then they abandoned their tents, as they supposed, forever.

The matter which claimed their attention next, was the palisade for the enclosure of their cattle at night, and to guard against the sudden inroads of savages and wild beasts. The forest at the upper or western entrance of the delta, supplied the timber, and the work was completed expeditiously, and without molestation. It was circular in shape, equidistant from the mansion, the tower being the centre, and was nine hundred feet in circumference, so that the mean distance from the centre was fifty yards.

Jasper Roughgrove was the patriarch and leader of this little band of wanderers. He was now past the meridian of life, and had long mourned the woes inflicted by his fellow man in civil society. He was an Englishman by birth, of good family, and had been educated for the church ; but being enamored of a lovely being at an early period of his career, who subsequently fell a victim to one of illustrious birth and position, the shock he experienced, resulted in an abandonment of his previously conceived projects, and a determination to spend the remainder of his days in a seclusion so remote and impenetrable, that he should not again be within the vortex of the evil temptations so rife and inextricable in the dense communities which boast of their urbane refinements. * Still adoring the ob-

ject of his early affection, notwithstanding she was a homeless wanderer, with two cherub children, he became her husband, adopted the innocent twins, and removed to America. From the port where he landed, he proceeded to the great West, and ascended the valley of the "Mad Missouri," until he found a peaceful abode, then considered beyond the limits of civilization. Here, for a season, he experienced the tranquility and bliss he had sighed for; the few emigrants that came into the region were very kind, and for a long time the Indians were quite friendly. But there being no Eden without its serpent, his repose was doomed to interruption. The Indians stole away little William, and his mother pined and died. Mary, however, the remaining child of his adoption, was a solace for many years, and he awaited with composure and christian resignation, the time when it might please a beneficent Providence to waft him to his beloved Juliet, in the mansions of eternal rest.

But in process of time William was rescued from the Indians, among whom he had been made a high chief. He was followed by a beautiful Indian maiden, of fair complexion, who loved him, and they were married, with the reluctant consent of Roughgrove. And soon after this, Mary was wooed and won by a young physician, who had sought the seclusion of the western wilds, from motives similar, in some respects, to those which had impelled the clergyman. This young man, Charles Glenn, having inherited some wealth in one of the Southern States of the Confederacy, induced the rest to accompany him thither, promising the full fruition of the tranquility they longed for under the protection of the laws of his country.

But Roughgrove, in Virginia, thought only of the grave of Juliet, in the far West; Mary, the bride of Glenn, dwelt in fancy on the loved wild-woods of her infancy—her birds and her flowers; William disdained the conventionalities of organized communities, and La-u-na, his bride, and daughter of a mighty chief, mourned for the running waters, the quivering leaves, and the fresh breezes of her native forests.

Therefore, after the experiment of the sojourn of a few years in Virginia, Glenn consented to return to the West, and hence the ex-

pedition to the base of the southern terminus of the Rocky Mountains.

The other individuals of the party consisted of little Juliet Glenn, a beautiful child of seven years; Charles Roughgrove, the son of William and La-u-na, of the same age; Biddy Rafferty, an Irish nurse; Joe Beck, a young man of Irish extraction, who had been Glenn's hired attendant in his first expedition; Sneak Punk, a tall thin Vermonter, who had been found in the woods trapping and hunting for gain, and had contracted to repair to Virginia with Glenn, for a stipulated price. The remainder were slaves: Cæsar, Pompey and Hannibal, their wives and children.

There were twelve horses, four mules, six oxen, eight cows, and a few calves; two goats, eight sheep, and several pigs; a dozen chickens, two hounds, one large spaniel, and one small mongrel; and the living catalogue was completed with several kittens and a parrot.

The journey of more than a thousand miles by land, and nearly as many by water, had been completed without serious accident, or material detriment to the many articles which Glenn had provided for their convenience in the wilderness. There had been no sickness; and none of the stock had died or been lost. The Indians who acted as guides and guards, had been selected by William, among his old acquaintances in the forest, who still obeyed him as their chief, and they were faithful to the end; stealing nothing, but intimidating the prowling bands of the desert, who might have otherwise compassed the destruction of the party. Daniel Boone, now in the vale of years, whom they encountered on their way, had journeyed with them several days, and acknowledged that he was tempted, notwithstanding his age, to accompany them the whole distance to the "undiscovered bourne," they were in quest of. But he intimated a purpose to find them at some future day.

Among the infinite variety of things transported beyond the desert, was a pretty complete philosophical and chemical apparatus, which Glenn deposited in the tower, on the centre building of the mansion, which was to be appropriated as a laboratory, and had been constructed partly with that design. It was likewise used as a depository for their superfluous arms and ammunition.

One of the best rooms had been reserved as a library, and several hundred volumes were tastefully arranged round the walls.

Near the base of the tower, a spring of pure water had flowed, forming a small rivulet that wandered away towards the running stream on the south side of the green area, but was lost in the grass or evaporated by the rays of the sun. This vein of living water was secured by excavation, for the uses of the family, and now formed a pool or well, in front of the building.

The main entrance of the house was on the south side, where the first beams of the morning sun streamed through the narrow windows, and gladdened the inmates with its genial greeting. And, indeed, from the first glance at the features of the country surrounding the valley, the conformation of the mountains on the west, and the concurrent hills and curtains of woods on the north and east, it was apparent that "Happy Valley" must be ever shielded from the bleak winds of winter, and that its vegetation in that latitude, must be in a great measure perennial.

CHAPTER II.

THE GAME TO BE SPARED—A DECREE—JOE AND SNEAK GOING
THEIR ROUNDS AS SENTINELS—A STRANGE, MYSTERIOUS DOG.

The sun had disappeared behind the mountain, but the calm twilight of an autumnal eve still lingered in the valley. The song of the mocking-bird was yet heard among the plum and crab-apple trees, tangled over with grape vines, that fringed the brooks on either side of the palisaded enclosure. Even the chirp of the katy-did was prolonged beyond what would be the usual limits of its season in a more eastern and rigorous clime. And these were evidences of a generous temperature in that region, which did not escape the observation of our adventurers.

But the cattle had been driven within the gates, panting with the burden of luxuriant grass which they had cropped from the natural pasture; the fowls had gone to the roost provided for them; and everything betokened a tranquil night after the labors of the day which had completed the final precautionary arrangements for the security of the party.

Tea was over in the large dining-room, on the left of the hall, and the servants had partaken of a bounteous repast in the kitchen.

"Now," said Mr. Roughgrove, leaning back in his homely chair, where he still sat at the table, and from which none had yet risen, "my little Juliet's petition must not be forgotten."

"No, grandpa," said the sweet little girl, who sat at Mary's elbow, "don't forget the poor birds, and antelopes, and ponies! For if they shoot the poor things, and make them suffer and die, how can it be the 'Happy Valley?'"

Glenn and Mary, William and La-u-na, smiled at the child's innocent conceit, while little Charles, who had been playing with a miniature cross-bow, looked archly at his cousin, and shook his head dissentingly.

"This is the proper time to attend to that matter," continued Roughgrove; "for sport will follow laborious duties in the wild-woods, as certainly as day will succeed the night. Let the men in the kitchen be called hither, so that all may hear the law which this little child has dictated."

"Go, Joe, and call in the negroes," said Glenn. •

"Oh, yes, lay down the law to them," said Joe, rising from the bench which he and Sneak were in the habit of occupying. "Cæsar, Pompey, Hannibal!" cried he, from the door, with a loud voice, "come here and have the law laid down to you—and see that you obey it!"

"Joe," said Sneak, who had followed him, "I have a notion the law is more for us than the tarnation niggers, and I want you to help me oppose it."

"What do you mean, Sneak?" asked Joe. "I hope you don't suppose they're going to put *us* down on a level with the niggers?"

"No, not 'zactly that—but I'm afeard they're a goin' to elevate 'em up to our high level. They've given 'em guns to shoot game with, and that's a beginnin'; and now they're a goin' to tell them over our heads, but for our ears, that nobody's to shoot anything in the valley. I'heard 'em whisperin' about it. 'Taint child's play, though little Jule did start it!"

"Sneak! that would spoil our fun," said Joe, in a lower tone. "They promised to take the vote on any thing, you know. Now let's you and I electioneer with the niggers before they go in, and get 'em to vote down that proposition. I despise a nigger, and above all, nigger equality; but if they can be made useful, why not use them?"

"That's it, Joe; but let me manage 'em. Do you go in. They'll believe me quicker than an Irishman."

"Yes, maybe they like a Yankee better than a gentleman," said Joe, stepping back.

"What do you mean?" cried Sneak, looking after him. "Never mind; I'll make him answer some other time," he added, finding Joe was out of hearing, and seeing the slaves approaching. After

whispering with them a few moments, he led them into the dining-room.

"Now, my children and friends," said old Mr. Roughgrove, "I want to observe to you that as God has been pleased to spare us through so many perils, and up to this moment of time, it is fitting that we should, besides continually returning thanks for such great mercies, manifest our gratitude by some instance of forbearance, and by some act of mercy to the creatures over which we have been given dominion. And as we have been taught that we must become as one of these little children," and he placed his hands on the heads of little Jule and Charley, "before we can enter the Kingdom of Heaven—so, it seems to me, we may safely act upon their guileless thoughts and promptings with a perfect confidence that it will not be displeasing in the sight of Him who marks even the fall of a sparrow."

"But," said Joe, interrupting him, "it was a sparrow-hawk I wanted to shoot at—and he was after the chickens."

"Massa!" said Caesar, "he was too big for dat; and der's a big owl, with eyes as big as your spectacles, comes arter de chickens in de night. Let me kill 'im, massa, I vote agin not shootin' "

"Hold your peace!" said Glenn.

"My children and friends," continued Roughgrove, "you all remember reading that when our first parents bestowed names on the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, they did not fly at the approach of man; that was because man had not yet sought to deprive them of life."

"Powder and guns was'n't invented then," said Sneak.

"No," said Roughgrove, "and there was no necessity for such inventions. Man could then lay hold on the victim for sacrifice; but as man became wicked, even the beasts feared him, and kept afar off, and so it became necessary to invent contrivances to reach them."

"Sneak," whispered Joe, "don't say anything more, or he'll keep us here all night. He'll begin at the beginning of creation, and branch off and follow every subject from that day to eternity."

"But I will not detain you with long references to matters so remote," said Roughgrove; "nevertheless there is instruction in them; for the beasts would not run away, nor the birds fly from us, if they knew we would not injure them. Then let us not injure them in this happy valley. Let us set apart one place where all may be in peace and security. Let us agree that we will not shoot buffalo, or deer, or antelope, or horse, or hare, or any of the feathered tribes, within the limits of this beautiful island, or on the borders thereof; far beyond the line of forest which fringes these precincts, and frames us in like a fair landscape on canvas, an abundance of game of every description may be found. Is it not so, William?"

William smiled, and answered in the affirmative.

"But the *varmints*!" said Sneak, his large eyes dilating into still larger dimensions; "are you going to spare the varmints, too?"

"No, Sneak," continued Roughgrove; "if panther, or wolves, or bear, or foxes, should come into the valley, it is not proposed to spare them. By shooting or worrying only such mischievous and destructive beasts, the other animals will become more gentle and confiding; and in time, having experienced the good effects of our protection, they will no more strive to avoid us than our domestic animals. I want to see the antelope and the wild horse lick salt from the tiny hands of Jule and Charley."

Jule and Charley clapped their hands in delight.

"But the *other* varmints, Mr. Roughgrove," said Sneak. "I came out here to catch beavers, otters, musk-rats, minks, coons, and sich like."

"Oh, you may catch them; but there will hardly be any necessity for shooting them. I hope we shall never be startled by the report of a gun in this valley."

"Joe," said Glenn, who observed the frequent whispered conferences with the slaves, "I shall vote for them."

"If massa Charles 'll vote for us, dat 'll do!" said Cæsar.

"Yes, I will vote for you when it is necessary to vote at all," said Glenn. "But there are questions upon which no vote will be

taken, and this is one of them. What Mr. Roughgrove has stated is not a mere proposition, but a law. William and I, and La-u-na and Mary, as well as the little children, have sanctioned it. Beyond the shelving embankments of the stream enclosing this green island, William and I have ascertained there is game of every description in abundance—which must suffice. Therefore, the exemption from molestation in the valley is a decree. Now listen to the penalty for any violation of the law. For the first offence, the gun of the offender shall be taken away from him for such length of time as the ladies and the little children may decide, after a fair hearing. For the second offence, extra labor in the field, or whatever else the jury may decide upon.”

“But, massa Charles,” said Cæsar, speaking for Pompey and Hannibal likewise, “is we to lose our guns, too? We isn’t to have ’em only Saturday arternoon ’holidays?”

“If you offend, Cæsar, you must suffer the penalty,” said Glenn, “whatever it may be. Your best course is not to offend.”

“I won’t break de law, massa.”

“Dar now,” said Pompey; “Spose de enemy come in de night when we’s on duty at de picket?”

“If he be really an enemy,” said Glenn, “you will be excused for firing.”

“A man aint a wild beast, you fool!” said Joe, disgusted at the tame acquiescence of the negroes.

“But he’s like ’em, sometimes,” said Sneak; “one time in Missouri, I shot at a wild hog in the night and killed a Indgen.”

“I remember it,” said Roughgrove, smiling. “But now we understand the rule adopted in this peaceful retreat; and I hope there will never be any necessity for the shedding of human blood, or the blood even of the wild animals, in this green valley.”

“Go, now,” said Glenn, to the slaves, “and see that your arms be in order. To-morrow we shall commence our explorations around the valley. And you, Joe, and Sneak, to your posts. This is your night to watch, until relieved by William and myself.”

Soon after the negroes were all sound asleep in their apartments, and Joe and Sneak were silently promenading round the quiet

dwelling, within their allotted limits, ever and anon peering out through the loop holes in the palisade. The semi-circle beat of Joe was on the north, and Sneak's on the south side of the enclosure; and when they met on the east and on the west, they lingered a few moments, and conversed in whispers.

"I like this place better than the other, Sneak," said Joe, when they came together on the west side, and after gazing out in silence at the mountain in the distance, which resembled a rising storm-cloud under the bright rays of the full moon.

"What other place?" asked Sneak.

"Glenn's place on the mad Missouri."

"I'm not sure that I agree with you," said Sneak. "No doubt it's a better place for beaver and otter—but who's to buy the skins?"

"Glenn is bound to buy 'em," said Joe; "I'm a witness to his obligation."

"Yes, Joe, he promised to buy 'em all. But how kin we agree about the price? If I won't take what he offers, who else will give me my price? That's the trouble."

"Trouble, your granny! What's the use of having any trouble about it?"

"That's my business."

"Yes, it's your business and your nature, too, to be snappish. Always thinking about bargains, and making money. Now what can you do with money out here?"

"I kin lay it up for a rainy day. I kin count it, and look at it."

"I thought so!" said he, contemptuously. "And so can little Jule and Charley look at their tops!"

"And don't they please 'em? You're a fool, Joe!"

"And you're a philosopher, Sneak. Pleasure is pleasure with you—and the filthy lucre makes you happy just to look at it, as the toys do the little children. Now listen to me: I'm thinking about real happiness, and I'm going to have it out here in the wilderness. I've got a mighty project!"

"What is it, Joe?" asked Sneak, with interest.

"It is this—no, I won't tell you, upon second thoughts."

"You're bound to tell me, now; what is it?"

"It's my secret, and I'll keep it."

"No, don't, Joe. You know Mr. Glenn made us swear to be friends, even if we did differ in opinion and quarrelled every day. Now, why not, like good friends in earnest, share together that real mighty project, you're a going to git?"

"Why not? I have reasons for it. It can't be shared by you, and that's enough."

Saying this, Joe turned away, and strode the length of his semi-circle in double-quick time. But Sneak was even with him, and so they met again on the eastern side of the enclosure.

"Why do you like this place better than the other?" asked Sneak, reverting to Joe's remark at their first meeting.

"Because, Sneak—and you mus'nt laugh at me, for I'm not afraid—this place is out of reach of arrows. You remember Glenn's first house was between two hollows, where the Indians could hide and rain down burning arrows on us."

"But they didn't hit us," said Sneak. "Joe, sometimes I used to think you was'nt a coward, and then agin sometimes that you was."

"What do you think now?" demanded Joe.

"I hav'nt made up my mind yet."

"Well, you'll make it up some of these days," said Joe, shaking his head.

"May be so," said Sneak, "and then I'll tell you what it is. But I'm afeard I shant like this place as well as t'other. I'm afeard the dod-rotted Indgens won't attack us here, and I shall soon be spiling for a fight."

"You can brag," said Joe, "but the first time I saw you, you were hiding from the Indians in a buffalo's belly."

"That's a lie, Joe, and you know it is—hold back your arm—you can call me a liar when I tell a lie, and I aint to hit you. That's our agreement. I was hiding from the fire in the prairie—and not from the Indgens."

"But the Indians were not so bad as the fire—and so I would'nt brag any more about it. And you're mistaken, Sneak, about no Indians being able to find us here. Mr. William, who knows more about 'em than any one among us, except the squaw—"

"Do'd rot it! don't call Mrs. La-u-na a squaw! She's a Christian now, or soon will be one, and she'll be an angel in heaven."

"Well—I mean his wife—and he says this place is well known to the chiefs of the Camanches and the Apaches—the fiercest warriors in the plains."

"How does he know that?"

"Know it? Can't he read the figures on the rocks? The sides of the big cave over yonder, he says, is written all over with the histories of many tribes—and some of the marks, he's quite sure, were made hundreds and hundreds of years ago."

"I should like to know how he kin tell that," said Sneak.

"Don't you think the Indians date their writings as well as we do? Well, he says, from their writings, that this place has always been kept as a neutral ground between the tribes."

"And now I see where little Jule got her notion from about sparing the game here. And perhaps its the reason you like this place better than t'other on the old Mad Missouri."

"It's no such thing, Sneak; for Mr. William says, that although the heads of the nations agreed never to let their warriors fight each other on this neutral patch, that would'nt prevent all of 'em from agreeing to fight against us."

"Good—I like that, Joe! for I shall get the blue devils, if thar's to be no fighting here."

"Yes, and you'll get blue pills if there is. That is'nt the happiness I'm after."

"Well, what is your project? If it's better than mine, why not let me have a sheer of it?"

"You don't know what you're talking about!"

"That's it, Joe; but I want to know—and I must know—for you've raised my curiosity."

"Well, find it out."

Saying this, Joe wheeled round, and retraced his steps to the opposite side of the enclosure.

"Where's Pete, Joe?" asked Sneak, when they met again.

"Which Pete? You know the pony's dead."

"Of course I do—then what other Pete can I mean but your dirty, little fice dog? You had no right to call a mangy little dog arter a horse."

"I had a right to do as I pleased. But where is he, sure enough? Is'n't that his bark?" he continued, listening to some slight yelping in the direction of the great cave on the northern bank of the stream.

"If it is'n't, it's as like it as two peas," said Sneak. "And it can't be anything else, for I know the sounds of all the wild animals. Over yonder in the west, I hear a painter, and in the south, a whole pack of wolves. I hear constantly catamounts, coons, otters, and now and then the grunt of a bear; I know 'em all, as well as my a, b, c's; and none of 'em, no critter, beast of the woods, the mountains, or the valleys, can make so nasty a noise as that ugly little fice, Pete!"

"I'll make him bite you for that," said Joe. "Pete! Pete! Here, Pete!" cried he, turning his face towards the house. But no Pete came. "Sneak," he continued, "it must be Pete! But how did he get out?"

"He? He can git through a dozen places. He's not bigger than a common sized cat. Listen! Now it's like two tarnation Petes."

"It's a fact," said Joe, listening intently. "It's precisely as if two were barking at once—and not in anger either—for I know when Pete's mad, by his bark."

"And when he's mad," said Sneak, contemptuously, "I wonder what it amounts to? His bite's like a flea-bite."

"But he can make more noise than big Ponto."

"Yes, dod rot him, he's made me lose many an hour's sleep," said Sneak; "I shot at him once, and I'm sorry I missed him."

"Sneak," said Joe, placing his hand on his comrade's shoulder "did you ever shoot at Pete?"

"I did, Joe; but it was purely accident. Mr. Glenn saw me when I done it—and he saw Pete, too—and like me, he thought he was a otter."

"Otter! Well that's an explanation." Then Joe turned away again and strode round to the other side, looking through the loop-holes as he proceeded, and listening for the bark of the dog, which, however, had soon ceased to be heard.

This time Joe was ahead of Sneak; and when the latter came up he found Joe in a most interesting attitude. He was gazing intently through the loop-hole, his feet and hands apart, and his body bent down and motionless.

"Dod rot it! What do you see?" exclaimed Sneak.

Joe made no answer for some time; but presently he turned his face, now quite pale, towards his companion, and every limb seemed to be trembling.

"What is it—an Indgen?" continued Sneak.

"Sneak," said Joe, in a mournful voice, "do you believe in apparitions?"

"In what?"

"Apparitions—ghosts—supernatural things!"

"Super what? Ghosts? Yes, I do. But dod rot 'em, they never hurt any body. I seed one once in a swamp, and it was like a ball of fire sailing through the air, and as I tried to ketch it, it vanished, and I fell up to my neck in muddy water."

"That aint what I mean," said Joe; "but I've seen an apparition—and, Sneak, although I don't care so much for flesh and blood, I'm frightened at this thing. I confess I am."

"You need'nt confess it, unless you've a mind to—for I can see it by moonlight. You're as pale as chalk. But what is it? Let me see." Thrusting Joe aside, he applied his eye to the orifice.

"Don't you see?" asked Joe.

"I see your tarnel Pete, that's all," said Sneak. "No—stop—yes—dod—why, Joe, there's two Petes! Where did the other come from?"

Joe was silent. And in truth, it was quite enough to stun him. There was his darling Pete, playing in the grass with another little

dog, of the same brown color, cropped ears, and short tail; and they were so much alike he could'nt tell "which from which," as he declared, when he whistled and called Pete. Both seemed to recognize his voice, for both looked up at the loop-hole, and wagged their tails precisely alike.

"Go out and ketch 'em," said Sneak, pointing to the nearest gate, "and I'll watch."

"Hold my gun, Sneak," said Joe, giving his musket to his companion, and unbarring one of the entrances, through which he passed. "Here, Pete," cried he, as he timidly approached the place where the dogs were playing, and where the grass had been much cropped by the sheep and goats. Both dogs came to him, and both wagged their short tails.

"Now pick up your Pete," said Sneak, through the loop-hole.

"I don't know which he is," said Joe, "they're both so much alike. Here, Pete!" he continued, stooping down. Then they wagged their tails more energetically than ever, and approached within a few inches of him. "I've got one, anyhow," he exclaimed the next moment, as he seized it by the back of the neck.

"Now snatch the other," said Sneak, "and come in; it's agin the rules for you to be out."

"Confound you! what do you mean?" demanded Joe, still holding his captive by the neck. "Sneak," said Joe, "I'm afraid I've got the wrong Pete. My Pete never showed his teeth at me. He never was so ungrateful."

"If that's the wrong Pete you've got, the other must be the right one—and why don't you snatch your'n?"

"Come here, Pete," said Joe, to the other. It came and licked the hand held out to caress him—while the other struggled and growled menacingly.

"Now, if you can't bring 'em both in," said Sneak, "you kin bring the right one, and let the wrong one go."

"I'm afraid he'll bite me," said Joe. "These little dogs are as quick as lightning. Sneak, I'm afraid to let him go."

"You're always afraid of somethin' Don't you see it's only a dream, and he can't hurt you? You know we brought here only

one Pete, and there aint another white man in a thousand miles of us. That's proof this is a dream. Pinch yourself and see. If it hurts, it'll be only 'magination in your sleep. But waking or dreaming, you must come in, or you may lose your scalp."

"My scalp! Oh, Sneak!" said Joe, looking round, "do you see or hear any signs of Indians?"

"I hear every kind of wild animal and varmint in creation," said Sneak, "and you know the Indgens can imitate 'em all. I would'nt swear they were'nt Indgens!"

"I won't stay here," said Joe, rising up with his own Pete under his left arm, and holding the other by the neck with his right hand. "Go to the d—l!" said he, and he hurled the counterfeit Pete some twenty feet away. He then ran with all his might towards the narrow gate in the palisade; but before he could get in, the little dog he had so roughly used, sprang after him and nipped him on the calf of the leg. "Where's my gun? give me my gun, Sneak," cried he, passing through, and rushing towards the loop-hole. But Sneak, laughing very heartily, was so tall that he could easily hold the gun above the reach of Joe.

"Give me my musket. I'll shoot the confounded dog. He's bit me, Sneak; give me my musket," he continued, releasing his own Pete, and intent on killing the other.

"Well, take it," said Sneak, after casting a glance out and seeing the little dog vanish in the distance; "but don't make sich a dod rotted fuss about it, or you'll alarm the house."

Joe seized the old musket and thrust the barrel through the loop-hole.

"Why don't you shoot?" asked Sneak.

"It's vanished!" said Joe.

"It was only a shadow," said Sneak. "Don't you see the moon's shining brightly, and of course Pete could'nt frolic about on the grass without being follered by his shadow."

"That's confounded nonsense, Sneak," said Joe, standing his gun against the palisade, and then rolling up his breeches. "See here!" he continued, turning to where the unobstructed moonlight fell upon his calf, and exhibiting the marks of the dog's teeth.

"That looks 'zactly as if you had been nipped by some real rascally little fice dog. Does it smart, Joe?"

"Smart? It hurts like fury! Could a shadow do that? Besides, didn't I hold him by the back of his neck, while he was trying all the time to bite my hand? Could a shadow do that? And when I let him go, and ran off with Pete in my arms, will any body try to persuade me it was his shadow that followed and bit me on the leg?"

"I don't say it was a real shadow done all that, Joe," said Sneak; "but you know Mr. Glenn calls dreams merely shadows; and it's my opinion this is a dream."

"It's no such thing," said Joe; "I'll swear to it! My leg aches like blazes!"

"You think so, Joe; but's only fancy," said Sneak, smiling. "In the morning, when we wake up there'll be no marks of teeth on your calf. But we mus'nt stay here. You go your beat, and I'll go mine."

"Stop, Sneak," cried Joe; "if it's really a dream, what's the use of keeping sentry?"

"Why, can't people be killed in their sleep, you gump, you?" said Sneak, indignantly. "It's the very time to be most watchful."

"Go ahead," said Joe, shouldering his gun, and muttering half conceived maledictions as he traversed his round, and stopping every ten or fifteen paces to peer through the loop-holes. And when the watchers were yet some paces apart, Joe was startled by a shrill whistle outside, and dropping his gun, sprang rapidly, although he had limped before, towards Sneak. Sneak only laughed at him. It was a buck which had been browsing near the palisade, and had lifted his head near the loop-hole just when Joe looked through it. Joe, saying now it was only a dream, returned for his gun, and continued his walk.

CHAPTER III.

MORE ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS DOG—THE FLOWERS AND FRUITS.

At the hour when Joe had his adventure with the mysterious Pete, beyond the enclosure, the same dog was the subject of remark in the house. The children had been taken to their chamber by Biddy Rafferty, the nurse, and the rest of the family were assembled in the best furnished apartment in the second story, before a cheerful fire of purest anthracite coal, which abounded in the cliffs round the valley.

"He is not an Indian dog," said La-u-na, who, by dint of application after her union with William, had mastered the English language.

"I think not," said William. "Were you close to him?"

"I was," said Mary. "La-u-na and I were returning from the great cave when we first saw him. He was playing with Joe's Pete, who had followed us. When I called, he wagged his tail, as did the other, and it was impossible to know which was Joe's dog, for they were similar in color and size."

"It is very strange!" said Roughgrove.

"Certainly there can be no other white people in this vicinity," said Glenn.

"Nor Indians, either," said William. "This valley is so situated that white men can never find it, unless it be by accident; and, so far, I have not been able to discover any recent traces of Indians. I don't think any have been at the cave since spring. But it is visited by them periodically, for there is a spirit within it, or supposed to be, to whom they make yearly offerings. Do you not compare the paintings so, La-u-na?"

"Oh, yes. When I was a little girl they used to take me to a cave in our country, and leave bread and dried meat for one of the guardian spirits. But it was not so large a cave as this."

"This cannot be the same one," said William.

"Oh, no!" said La-u-na. "It was not so far away. But my father and the prophet always put marks on the walls of the cave, like those we saw to-day."

"The little dog was fat, too," said Mary. "Perhaps he lives on the food kept there for the spirit."

"Perhaps he's the spirit, Mary," said Glenn, smiling. "Joe will solve the mystery. I think, however, it is a stray dog which belonged to the trappers. Or his owner may have perished in the wilderness. We shall find out more about him soon. Did he go in the cave?"

"No," said La-u-na; "he swam the brook, and clambered up through a narrow chasm to the summit of the cliff, where we saw him last. He looked down at us from under a stunted cedar, and wagged his tail in friendly adieu."

"To-morrow," said Glenn, "we shall begin our explorations round the valley and in the woods. No doubt we shall make many interesting discoveries, and I think I will have use for my crucibles in the winter. I have no doubt there is gold in the hills, from the volcanic deposits everywhere."

"I fear there is!" said Roughgrove with a sigh; "and if so, and the fact should become known, our happy valley will ultimately become the scene of many changes, and of a mercenary and sinful population. But God's will be done! And it may be his will to people this interminable waste with the teeming millions of Europe, else why these deposits of treasure?"

"We can keep the secret," said Glenn. "Sneak is the only one who would be disposed to make a fortune by such discoveries, and you know I have bound him by contract to sell everything he makes or finds, to me. He cannot abandon us, at least for many years, as no one would think of traversing the desert alone. But there are other objects of interest. I have already found salt springs, sulphur, and saltpetre—besides the extraordinary fields of mica, and precious stones. Then the soil and climate! It is remarkable how late the vegetation remains green, and how rapidly our buckwheat has grown! I should not be surprised if two crops of corn could be produced here. It is now late in November, and there has been

no frost. Perhaps cotton and sugar can be grown. We shall have abundance of useful employment, as well as pleasing amusement."

"I never tasted better grapes," said Mary, "than we found on the banks near the smoking stream."

"Yes, we have a smoking stream, too," said Glenn, "pouring out of the rocks near the cave. I tested it with the thermometer, Mary, and ascertained that it will boil our eggs."

"But the grapes, Charles!" continued Mary. "There were blue ones and white ones, the largest I ever saw, growing wild—and the most delicious. Then the haws—the plums—the persimmons—the largest I ever beheld!"

"And the flowers!" said La-u-na; "they were brighter and more abundant, William, than those I brought you on the banks of the "Mad Missouri." This is the "Happy Valley."

"I thank God for it!" said William. "And, among the other delights, I have discovered speckled trout in the stream; and I know Glenn has a store of fishing tackle."

"But before you catch the fish," said Mary, "you must fulfill your promise to little Juliet."

"I will try," said William. He had promised to capture an antelope for her. "But it may be a long time before I succeed. And little Charley reminds me every day of my promise to catch him a colt or pony. Undoubtedly, from the indications, great numbers of wild horses and buffaloes come hither at certain seasons; but at what season, or rather at what time the season changes in this peculiar region, none of us can have any other means of ascertaining than to wait and see. I find trees, and bushes, and vines here, that I never beheld before."

"And the most beautiful, and the most gigantic specimens of the cacti!" said Glenn.

"To-morrow will reveal more," said Roughgrove. He then produced his book; and after prayers, the families dispersed to their various chambers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST HUNT—JOE KILLS A WOLF—SLAUGHTER OF DEER—
TWO GRIZZLY BEARS, AND A BATTLE WITH THEM—THE WILD
HORSES.

"Let me see your leg, Joe," said Sneak, as he and Joe rode out of the gate of the enclosure, early the next morning, in the rear of Glenn and William.

"There," said Joe, rolling up his pantaloons, "look at that!" The marks of the dog's teeth were plainly visible.

"If it was a dream, Joe," said Sneak, "your own Pete must have bit you in your sleep."

"That's nonsense!" said Joe. "It was no dream. But where are we going?"

"We're going to ride all round the valley in the outer edge of the timber, where we can shoot without breaking the law."

"I'm glad of that, Sneak, for I want to kill something in revenge for this hurt on my leg. Yonder's a buck's tail, now!"

"Don't shoot—or you'll lose your gun," exclaimed Sneak, as Joe threw his musket up to his shoulder, and seemed to be taking aim at the deer as it leaped leisurely through the long grass.

"I was tempted," said Joe; "and I pulled the trigger, but it wasn't cocked. If it had been cocked, that doe would have fallen, and I would have been the first law-breaker. I hope you fixed my lock for me, Sneak, as you are our gun-mender."

"Yes, I made it easier. If it had been cocked, you'd have found it out. But why don't you take one of the rifles, and throw that old cannon away? It makes twice as much noise as any other gun, and don't do half as much execution."

"It makes a good report, Sneak, and I like it for that, because everybody knows who's shooting; but the other observation of yours about its not doing half execution, is simply a lie."

"What?"

"A lie, but not a fighting lie, you know—for we're both in too good humor to quarrel. But to prove it's a lie, you have only to remember the execution it's done in former days and nights, among the Indians, the wolves—yes, and your puppies."

"Dod rot it, Joe, don't make any allusion to 'em, or we'll fight, sartin. Else I'll kill your Pete."

"You may kill the phantom Pete, as Mr. Glenn calls him, and welcome. But I love my old musket, Sneak, and won't give it up. I love it for its many reminiscences, as Mr. Roughgrove calls 'em."

"What's that?"

"Oh, only the slaughter it has made—and some good-natured kicks it gave us. You haven't forgot how it knocked me over one night when you peeped over my shoulder, and the back of my head broke your tooth?"

"Is that it?" said Sneak, indignantly, lifting his hand to his mouth and exposing the fractured tooth. "Dod rot the old good for nothing gun! No, I hav'nt forgotten it, and never shall, as long as the old consarn's in my sight. I'll smash it some of these days. Don't talk to me about those remniscences."

"If you do, Sneak, of course you'll be prepared for war. We'll fight, then; and I'll not stop as long as you have a tooth in your head."

They maintained a distance of some twenty or thirty paces in the rear of Glenn and William, who determined to ride the entire circuit of the island within the limits of its boundary of running waters. On the level side of the laughing stream, they met with a great variety of luscious fruits, and among the rest were astonished to find, occasionally, apple and pear trees in full bearing. It was conjectured that the seeds must have been dropped by pigeons or other birds of passage. The grapes were in the most surprising abundance, and of excellent flavor. Wild raspberry bushes, still in bearing, blackberry, gooseberry, and whortleberry bushes, were scattered in promiscuous profusion round the entire circuit of the island.

With the exception of a few places, there were no means of

gress on the opposite side of the stream, and these were only afforded by exceedingly narrow and precipitous ascents, through half-concealed fissures in the otherwise nearly uniform embankment of rocks, which rose never less than twenty, and often as high as fifty feet above the water. At the lower end of the delta, where the water dashed through a cañon, there could be no possible ingress for man or beast, for the stream leaped down an almost perpendicular descent, which only the most active of fishes could ascend. Through this avenue, however, the party, as they paused to contemplate its grandeur, could distinguish a vast number of water fowl in the little lake beyond. Among these were swans, geese, brant, and several varieties of ducks; while upon the margin, stalked the long-legged crane, and ran the plover, as well as the smaller snipe. These had evidently enjoyed a long exemption from the murderous aim of man, as none of them seemed alarmed at the proximity of the party, now within thirty yards of them. On the contrary, they looked at the strangers with great curiosity, and some approached them for a closer inspection.

"Don't fire," said Glenn, seeing Joe aiming his musket in that direction.

"I don't mean to, sir," said Joe, lowering his gun; "I was only seeing how many I could kill if I was to shoot. I've got buck shot in, sir; but if I had duck shot, I think I could knock over a dozen of 'em every time. But, sir, is it agoing to be against the law to kill 'em in the pond?"

"From this side, Joe," said Glenn. "The object is to keep the game in the island as gentle as possible."

"And I don't see what good that is going to do," said Joe, in an undertone to Sneak. "The niggers have the hardest time of it, though; for they have been compelled to make those high fences round the field, just to keep out the gentle game."

"And the hosses and the bull, Joe," said Sneak; "that Tom, the black bull, can walk through any common fence."

"Yes, and he can whip any wild animal they can fetch against him."

"But the fences won't keep out the coons," said Sneak, "and I shall have sport catching 'em. I see signs of 'em everywhere."

Glenn and William then, with some difficulty, crossed the stream at one of the very few places on the north side which admitted egress from the valley. The ascent was steep, and before the party had proceeded far up the hill, Joe slipped off his horse behind.

"Stop," cried he. "Catch Dick! Plague take the horse."

"Dick's higher than your little pony," said Sneak, seizing the reins; "and if you hadn't fell on your feet, it mought've been a mighty hard tumble. But don't blame the hoss; it was the hill, and it's as much as I kin do to keep on my hoss' back, and I'm a good rider."

"Good rider!" said Joe, mounting again. "Say good walker—for your long legs can touch the ground. I'm as good a rider as you."

"Hold up your gun!" cried Sneak, in alarm. "Dod rot it, don't you see it's cocked?"

"No, I didn't see it, Sneak," said Joe. "It must have been done by the bushes—and it was pointing right at you. I wouldn't kill you for the world, Sneak," he added, uncocking his musket.

"And I wouldn't be killed for a dozen worlds, Joe, even by accident. But spur up; they're getting too far ahead, and the ground's leveller here."

There was heavy timber on the hill sides next the valley, but the growth became smaller as they receded from the water; thus, when they had reached the summit, they were even with the tops of the highest trees, and surrounded by stunted oaks and bushes. Beyond, and as far as the eye could reach, there was a succession of hills or steppes, mostly barren of vegetation. But when they drew near the head of the valley, they entered the grand forest of noble trees which extended, apparently, all the way to the mountain.

As they entered this forest, Glenn and William, who waited till Sneak and Joe came up, announced that the restriction was removed from the use of their guns, and that a prize should be awarded the one who achieved the first success.

"But I'm afraid of getting lost," said Joe, "if we scatter off by ourselves."

"That's impossible," said William. "The forest is not exceeding

a half mile in breadth, and you have only to turn to the right or left, and you emerge into the prairie. Then, following the timber, it will certainly lead you into the valley."

"But suppose I take the wrong end of it," said Joe, "won't it lead me to the mountain?"

"If you don't know a mountain forty miles off, from a green valley in sight of you," said Sneak.

Then the hunters dispersed in different directions, Joe spurring his horse through a patch of spice bushes. But before the rest of the party had separated far, Joe's gun was heard. It was known to be his gun, because the report was different from any other ever heard before. It was like the blasting of rocks. The next moment his horse came dashing over the bushes, his ears thrust back, his nostrils distended, and his eyes flashing fire. He snorted, he pawed the earth. He was riderless; and this attracting the attention of the other hunters who had instinctively turned and looked in that direction upon being startled by the astounding report, they rode back briskly to look for Joe. They found him lying on his back, and his musket balanced horizontally on the bushes, some twenty-feet distant.

"What's the matter, Joe?" asked Glenn, dismounting.

"His dodrotted gun's kilt him agin," said Sneak.

"He moves," said William.

"I was stunned a little," said Joe, rising slowly into a sitting attitude.

"A little!" said Glenn.

"Where's my horse?" asked Joe, looking round somewhat wildly.

"Here he is," said Sneak. "I led him back, poor fellow!"

"Led him back? How did he get away? Where's my gun?"

"See thar!" said Sneak, pointing to it.

"How came it there?" asked Joe. "Oh, I remember! Mr. Glenn," he continued, now rising to his feet, "may I whip Sneak?"

"Whip Sneak?"

"Don't let him do it, Mr. Glenn," said Sneak; "and I know he could do it now, for I'm as weak as a baby. I shall never be strong

agin, till I can find a clean place to lay down and laugh in, a whole hour by myself."

"The peace must be maintained, Joe," said Glenn; "nevertheless there must be an end of such practical jokes as these—and you can bring the matter before us to-night."

"Sneak," said Joe, "didn't you promise to draw the load out of my gun, when you mended the lock yesterday?"

"I did promise—but I couldn't perform it, the screw wouldn't take holt of the piece of old hat you had rammed down."

"Why didn't you say so, you rascal? I thought the gun was empty, and loaded it again."

"That's the explanation," said Glenn—"and indeed the gun explained itself by its tremendous report."

"And it ain't busted," said Sneak, examining the musket which he had taken down from the bushes. "Throw the dod rotted thing away, Joe," said he, as he placed it in the hands of the owner.

"I shall do no such thing," said Joe. "Mr. Boone used to say it was a safe gun, because it had been so often tested by overloading and by double loading. I'm not afraid of its bursting, and I'll stick to it, because it's a safe gun."

"If you consider it a safe gun," said William, smiling, "no one else has any right to object to it."

"Yes, I have," said Sneak; "look here!" and he exposed his fractured tooth, with whose history all were familiar. And Joe himself laughed at the remembrance.

"But what did you shoot at?" asked Sneak. "We all know who suffered most."

"Do you?" said Joe, re-charging his gun very composedly. "Mr. Boone used to say, no matter what was hit or missed, every hunter, after firing, ought to load his gun again, before moving from his tracks. Now I'll show you what I fired at," he continued, when he had finished, leading the way among some wild-rose bushes a few paces to the left. "And I shall claim the premium; there it is—dead enough."

"What is it?" asked they, following close.

"An old he wolf," said Sneak, bestriding the animal, which was found to be completely riddled by the double load of buckshot.

"I claim the prize," said Joe.

"You can't," said Sneak, "its not game. An old gray he-wolf, too poor and weak to git out of the way—and maybe it had laid down to die with old age—and who knows it wasn't dead before he shot it——"

"Stop, Sneak," said Glenn. "It is you, now, who are disposed to quarrel with Joe. There is fresh blood, and abundance of it, to prove the wolf was living. I know it is hard for a great hunter like yourself, to be second to any one; but the prize is Joe's this time; there was no exception of wolves—and indeed the killing of a wolf is entitled to a premium in the States as well as in the wilderness."

"I won't dispute it, sir," said Sneak; "but rot me if I'd shot such a mean and contemptible old decrepid varmint as that. Even the skin ain't good for nuthin' "

"Because I riddled it," said Joe, now in high spirits, and remounting his appeased horse. "It was a great shot, Sneak! I'll tell you all about it some other time. It was running when I pulled the trigger—and I took deliberate aim, because I didn't dream of the two loads, and never thought of being kicked."

Amicable terms being restored between Sneak and Joe, Glenn and William left them to pursue their vagaries as they pleased, and rode out towards the prairie. The wind came from the west, and hence the smoke of Joe's gun was wafted to the valley instead of the mountain. The game, therefore, whose curiosity as much as their fear is always excited by novel sounds, had not been thrown into consternation. On the contrary, Glenn and William, as they had anticipated, beheld various animals converging towards the scene of Joe's achievement, or disaster, as if to ascertain the cause of the startling uproar in the woods.

Selecting the finest bucks, Glenn and William each killed one, and then desisted from the destruction. But while they were dressing the fat venison, and hanging the bodies above the reach of prowling wolves or panthers, they were startled again by the report

of Joe's musket on the other side of the woods. This time the explosion was not so astounding; but it was shocking enough. And it was followed soon after by the sharp crack of Sneak's rifle, in the same vicinity.

"Joe missed the mark that time," said William.

"And Sneak hit it," said Glenn.

"Yes," said William, "Sneak don't often miss."

"There goes Joe again!" said Glenn, as another booming sound reverberated on the ear. "What can it mean? Perhaps they've treed a flock of turkeys. But I told them not to fire at birds."

"And there's Sneak's rifle again," said William. He wouldn't shoot a turkey, and it is not often that he fires a second time at the same object."

William and Glenn secured their bucks, which was effected by bending down two elastic saplings, and tying the animals to the stoutest boughs. When the trees were released they lifted the bucks up some ten feet from the earth. By the time this was accomplished, Joe and Sneak were firing alternately in quick succession.

"Let us hasten over there," said Glenn, and see what all this bombarding means."

"Very well," said William; "for I can't understand it. It cannot be the Indians, however; for, although they might not have other weapons than bows and arrows, still they never go into battle without the war whoop. And, besides, we should not have been wholly neglected by them."

They rode off in the direction of the firing, and were not a moment too soon. First, they came across the horses of Joe and Sneak browsing on a little grass plot, very composedly. A little beyond, they found a dead doe, pretty completely riddled with buckshot, in irrefragable testimony of another triumph of Joe. But, beyond this, they found a buck, which Sneak's rifle ball had penetrated in the fatal spot behind the shoulder. Both had their throats cut, and Joe's knife lay beside his victim, showing very plainly that he had been interrupted in the process of dressing the meat.

The firing was still kept up, several hundred paces distant from this place.

"It's a grizzly bear," said William; "I heard him scream at the last crack of Sneak's rifle, and he must be wounded; but twenty rounds won't kill him. "Let us be careful! They are the most desperate and dangerous animals in the woods. I hope Joe and Sneak have escaped unhurt."

"On! on!" said Glenn, "or we may be too late! They are not mounted and cannot escape! And they have ceased firing, now."

This was true. But if the reports of guns did no longer resound in the woods, the voice of Joe was very distinctly heard calling for help.

"Yonder they are," said William, galloping forward to the rescue.

Sneak and Joe were posted on the apex of an Indian mound in the edge of the woods, and were assailed by two enormous grizzly bears, that ran round them, and ever and anon endeavored to leap up the steep ascent. They were both wounded, and evidently weak from loss of blood. When this awful spectacle burst in view of Glenn and William, both Sneak and Joe were fighting desperately with long heavy clubs they had torn from the tree that stood on the summit of the mound. It seemed that their guns were either out of order, or that they did not now have time to load them.

"Oh, Mr. Glenn—oh, Mr. William Roughgrove, save us!" cried Joe.

"Shet your mouth!" said Sneak, "and save your wind for the bars!" And as he said this, he sent the foremost one, who charged up the hill, down again with a tremendous blow on the snout.

"Take that," said Joe, aiming his long club at the other, which took effect on his head and stunned him. "Shoot, Mr. Glenn!" continued Joe, "or they'll kill us both to a certainty."

Thus repulsed, the furious animals rested in a small depression at the base of the mound, so thickly overgrown with brambles, that neither Glenn nor William could see them.

"They'll come up again in a minute," said Joe, "they're only

getting their breath. I see 'em. Their red glaring eye-balls are upon us! We're doomed, if you don't save us."

"Dod rot it, keep your mouth shet," said Sneak. "Be still, I say, or I'll pitch you down on 'em. Just give me time to fix another flint."

"Joe," said Glenn, "if you see them, why don't you shoot?"

"I can't," cried Joe. "I rammed down the bullets first, and the powder on top of 'em. The gun won't go off."

"Why don't *you* fire again, Sneak?" asked William.

"I lost my flint," said Sneak, "trying to help Joe fix his dod rotted musket. The briars pulled it out. I've got another, but it's too big—I'm trying to fit it though—if Joe'll only keep his mouth shet, and not aggravate the tarnal bars."

"Oh, Lord!" cried Joe. "Here they come again. Don't shoot for Heaven's sake; you'll hit us," cried he, seeing William and Glenn lift their guns to their shoulders.

"Perhaps we had better reserve our fire," said Glenn, taking down his rifle. "There is danger of aiming too high." William thought so too.

"Whar's my sticker?" cried Sneak, dropping his gun and resuming his club. "Now, Joe, let's hit the tarnation monsters on the teeth." The attack this time was more feeble than the last, and the assailants were easily repulsed under the redoubtable blows of the men fighting for their lives.

"Let us finish them now," said Glenn.

"Yes, before they have time to recover," said William. They spurred forward until they were within a few feet of the ditch. The wounded and bleeding animals glared at them, and were evidently meditating an attack, when the well-directed balls of the skillful marksmen gave them the *coup de grace*. Both the huge animals now lay in the agony of death; and a few moments after, Sneak was bestride them, exhibiting their formidable claws.

"I'm the conqueror!" cried Joe, dancing round. "Mr. Boone told me once that when any one killed a grizzly bear, he was made a head chief, and he always wore the bear's claws. Huzza for my musket!"

"You're a dod rotted fool," said Sneak. "They minded your

buckshot jest about as much as hogs minds the acorns that fall on their backs."

"I know better, I know better," said Joe, in great glee, as he pointed out the immense number of holes in the sides of the animals, from which the blood was oozing. Acorns don't make the blood run. You shot only five or six times, and here's at least forty holes. I did the business; I killed 'em both."

"You've spoilt both their hides," said Sneak—and that's all."

"Don't quarrel, or William and I will claim to have killed them both," said Glenn.

This being spoken with some severity, and decision of manner, put a temporary end to the dispute.

"What shall be done next?" asked William, looking at the prostrate animals, with interest. "It is still early."

I'm jest in tune now," said Sneak. "Not a bit worried. I'm keen as a razor to go on. Let Joe go back, if he's tired or afeard of anything."

"Me?" said Joe, who had succeeded in extracting the wads from his gun, and in charging it with the powder in the right place. "Me tired? I hav'nt got my blood half up, yet. I feel like a wood's colt. I'm greedy for more triumphs over Sneak. I can out run him, throw him down, and beat him shooting."

"Why don't you say braggin, and hollerin when there's danger," retorted Sneak.

"Then we will go on," said Glenn; and ascending the mound he sounded three loud blasts of his horn, which was the signal for Cæsar, Pompey and Hannibal to bring up the wagon and convey the game to the house. The signal was understood, and was answered by three blasts from the field where the negroes were at work.

The party then lost no time in dressing the huge animals, and as their skins were stripped off, it was more apparent than ever, that Joe's musket had done a large share of the work of destruction. Sneak said the buckshot only destroyed the hides, but William informed him that he had learned a remedy for such small rents, when he dwelt among the Indians.

Then Joe and Sneak narrated the manner of their encounter

with the bears. It was when they were cutting the throats of the deer that the first grizzly had made his appearance. He was not the first to begin the battle, however, but merely circled round the deer at a respectful distance, and would have gone off, if Joe had let him alone. But Joe, not wishing to let him alone, and quite ignorant of the danger, blazed away in spite of the remonstrances of Sneak. This precipitated matters; for the bear, although knocked down by the heavy discharge, soon recovered his feet; and, as is his invariable custom, charged upon his assailant. Of course Joe ran away, for his gun was not yet recharged; and he ran directly towards Sneak; this brought the bear to a pause; but soon his comrade joining him, the charge was continued. Sneak, who had been more expert than Joe, fired not without effect at the second bear, and this produced another hesitation on the part of the animals. But before waiting to see what their ultimate decision might be, both Joe and Sneak ran, with all their might, for the mound. There the combat was continued, until both guns were disabled, when clubs were substituted in the hand to hand engagement that ensued, which terminated as we have seen, in the victory of the men over the wild beasts of the forest.

The wagon came up by the time the animals were dressed, and the negroes who had learned something of wood-craft during the long journey from the east, were informed where all the deer might be found. They were directed to take them home, and to return for another load, if the signal should be given, as it was determined to make a day's hunt of it.

Glenn and William continued to advance on the right side of the woods, skirting the prairie, while Joe and Sneak kept on the left.

"I see chalcedony and other pretty stones in the chasms," said Glenn, as they rode along the edge of the forest, and occasionally leaped their horses over the gullies worn in the soil by the rains, now dry, and leading towards the centre of the woods, through which the mountain stream perpetually flowed.

"Oh yes," said William, smiling; "there are many precious stones in the wilderness, and the Indians know the value the white men place upon them."

"Then I marvel they do not make them an article of trade," said Glenn.

"It is not marvelous," said William. "They do not wish the whites to be hunting pebbles in their country. Some of the tribes make the penalty death, if any one sells a stone. The kings or chiefs take possession of all that are found. La-u-na, and a few of the special favorites, were permitted to keep some and to wear them. They likewise know where gold may be found; but it is death to reveal the secret. They have the sagacity to prefer the forests and hunting grounds to the neighborhood of civilization—for such neighborhood never fails to demoralize them. The coins of the white man, and the spirituous liquors, produce, invariably, degeneracy and degradation. But even in degradation and dependency; not many of the tribes have revealed the localities of their gold mines; and now they are lost, in the east, for many of the nations are extinct. These things I learned from the old men when I lived among them."

"But I have seen too many evidences of the presence of gold in this vicinity, for the treasure long to escape the cupidity of the white man," said Glenn.

"Then, alas for the poor Indian," said William. "There," he continued, as his horse leaped over the dry sand of an exhausted rivulet.

"What did you discover there?" asked Glenn, who reined in his horse simultaneously with William. They turned and rode back, for they had been going at a brisk pace. William dismounted and beckoned Glenn to do the same.

"Look at that," said William, pointing to the print of a man's foot in the sand.

"Of course we must suppose the Indians frequent these fine hunting grounds," said Glenn.

"It is not the foot-print of an Indian," said William. "This is another thing I learned among the Indians. He wore a moccasin, as all do in the wild woods, but the toes are out, and the heel made too deep an indentation for an Indian."

"Such knowledge as this may be useful," said Glenn.

"Of course," said William; and if the Indian is incapable of

comprehending the utility of the infinite variety of studies in the acquirement of an education in civilized communities, depend upon it, there are thousands of useful things learned in the wild-woods, of which civilized man has no knowledge. Now, he continued, stooping down and examining the ground, "I know not only that this person was a white man, but that he was an old man."

"An old man!" said Glenn. "How can you tell that?" "From his short, unsteady step," replied William, "and the employment of a cane. There is the mark of his stick; and all these tracks indicate that he was not lame. I could, if it were necessary, track him for miles, even through the grass."

"An old white man!" repeated Glenn. "Perhaps a solitary wanderer, escaped from the Indians, who may have captured him."

"It is possible," said William; "for a great many white men, supposed to be lost or dead, are either captured, or voluntarily take up their abode among the Indians. But it is not often, surely, that old men wander thus far from the precincts of civilization."

"It may be," continued Glenn, "that this man was the master of the little dog seen by our wives, and also by Joe and Sneak."

"It must have been so," said William. "Here is the foot print of a small dog," he continued, still following the track.

"That accounts for Joe's apparition," said Glenn. "The old man is probably dead, or the dog has lost his master. Can you tell how long it has been since the track was made?"

"No—not exactly. Only I can perceive it was made since the last rain. When that was, none of us have any knowledge."

"It is a mystery," said Glenn, pondering, "which perhaps no one may solve."

Soon after, they remounted and pursued their way towards a high mound, which had attracted their attention. Many deer were seen by them; but they resolved to reserve their fire until after they had taken the extensive view of the country which the mound promised to afford them. Arrived at its summit they beheld on the right, and embracing all the region from east to west, as far as the eye could reach, a hilly prairie country, and in many places arid and barren wastes. But in the depressions between the hills—which were thrown in succession like vast billows on the ocean—where

there was some degree of moisture, a luxuriant growth of vegetation was observable. In these green places, numbers of buffalo, elk, and deer were seen.

"If Joe were with us, now," said Glenn, "he would hold up both hands and open his mouth."

"His eyes?" asked William.

"No—his mouth. He always opens his mouth in astonishment. His eyes are always open, when not sleeping. And now I have ascertained one thing," continued Glenn. "There are winters in this climate and in this proximity to the mountain. Here is a fading mullen."

"Oh yes, there will be winter," said William. "There are thousands of proof. No doubt it will be very cold in exposed places, and there may be deep snows. But we shall not suffer in the valley. It is not only sheltered from the wind, but it has the best Southern exposure of any valley I have ever seen. And if the Indians do not frequent it, you may be sure the buffalo do. It is enriched by them—and they are compensated by its abundant crop of grass.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Glenn, gazing at a number of wild horses through his pocket glass. "They are fat and saucy."

"Yes, I see them," said William. "They are the same, domestic or wild;—the most beautiful of the quadruped creation, and often the most playful of animals. They range over a wide extent of country, and there is a superstition among the Indians that there is one among them, and the leader of them all—a large and magnificently white horse, that never dies. It is certain he has never been captured or killed."

"Can that be so?" asked Glenn.

"There is some apparent foundation for it, in the fact that all droves of wild horses have their leaders, the most formidable and sagacious specimens of their kind; and these chiefs are frequently white. They are not taken, because they are the fleetest of their race; and rarely shot, because they are the most watchful. From this example is derived the custom among the Indians, in their bat-

ties, to place their commander-in-chief on a white horse, and I believe civilized nations are adopting the same habit.

"Yes, I believe so," said Glenn; "and truly much may be learned in the wilderness, as well as in the teeming haunts of civilization. Why should not horses have a king, as well as bees their queen. Even the swans and geese which fly over us now, have their leaders. And lo! I see the white horse. There, a little to the right of the others, and nearer the mound than the rest."

This was true. The large and majestic animal came in view by ascending to the summit of a slight elevation in the prairie between the mound and the green pasture in which the rest were collected. He stood with his breast toward the men, his neck arched, and his long mane and tail lifted horizontally by the gentle breeze. His ears were thrust forward, and his gaze fixed with steadiness upon the strangers or intruders in his dominions. After standing thus some minutes, he turned his head over his back and neighed loudly; this brought most of the family to the high prairie, and all seemed to gaze in the direction of the mound.

"It is curiosity, more than alarm," said William. "I doubt whether they have ever been pursued by man. However, most animals seem to know when they are within reach of the missiles of man's invention, and these horses are a quarter of a mile distant."

"They are beautiful," said Glenn. "I see them of every hue; but the speckled or spotted ones, predominate. And they are fat, too."

"Certainly," said William, "in such pastures as these. No doubt they frequent our valley in the winter, where I am satisfied the green grass is perennial. If we adhere to the rule adopted, and accustom them to see us often with impunity, in process of time they will come to regard us as protectors, rather than as enemies."

"The rule must be observed, if possible," said Glenn, animated at the thought of being able to see such numbers of beautiful wild horses from the tower of the mansion. "And I will do more; I will have salt sprinkled on the earth expressly for them; and if our corn matures before the frost whitens the valley—if it ever whitens it—they shall be fed at certain places as near the enclosure as possible."

“It will be a successful experiment,” said William; “and surely we can at any time kill enough game in these woods, without being under the necessity of disturbing the visitors to the valley. Still, we must not be too sure. For the animals, quick to learn where danger exists, may abandon the forest and congregate in the place where there is an exemption from wounds and death. But, in proof that they have not yet acquired that knowledge, just listen to Sneak and Joe.”

CHAPTER V

JOE AND SNEAK MEET WITH A KING BUFFALO BULL—AND A BIG
ELK—AND A BUCK—AND A SKUNK—AND A DOE.

"Sneak," said Joe, as they rode along on the left of the forest, and in sight of the apparently limitless prairie, "these pine and cedar bushes, and the green grass between 'em, reminds me of some rich gentleman's lawn."

"It does, does it? Well, there's no poor gentlemen here, and the lawn's our'n. When I was a boy, and my father was a farmer in Varmount, he got broken up by paying, or not paying, I don't know which, some nasty notes in bank. He was the unhappiest man I ever saw, when the little printed notices came in, saying at what hour tremendous sums must be paid in bank, whether he had any money or not. I thought if I ever got to be a man, they would'n't ketch me in that way—and they can't. I'd like to see 'em send any of their disagreeable notifications out here. Joe, we are happy men."

"That's true, Sneak. And I intend to be the happiest man in the world. I have a mind to tell you my secret—"

"Well, go ahead; I'm listenin'."

"No—hang me if I do. I didn't think of one thing."

"What thing?"

"Why, if you knew all about my project, you might get ahead of me, and be the happiest man yourself, and make me the miserablest."

"Dod rot it, what do you mean? What's your project?"

"I won't tell you, because I'm afraid you'd be a rival."

"Rival? What's that? There's no squaw for us to be arter."

"Squaw! You may have 'em all to yourself. I never saw but one that was handsome—and I don't believe she's a full blooded Indian. No—I will not even think of a squaw."

"Then who is it? The Irish gal?"

"Look there!" cried Joe, who was a little in advance of his companion, as his horse snorted and stopped suddenly.

In a small plat of ground on the left, where there were not even any bushes, but a most luxuriant crop of grass, there stood an enormous buffalo bull.

"Don't shoot, Joe," cried Sneak, when his companion threw his musket up to his face.

"Why, Sneak?" asked Joe.

"'Case you might as well spatter your buck-shot agin the face of the cliff, down at the cave, as to fire in that bull's face. Don't you see thar's a bushel of clay and dry mud on the long hair between his eyes?"

"But I can shoot at his breast," said Joe.

"What good'll that do? The spot where lead can enter between his ribs from the front, aint bigger than your hand; and if you could hit it, your shot would'nt go through the hide and gristle. Nothing but a rifle ball will do."

"I know better," said Joe; "you only want to kill him first," and he raised his gun again.

"'Pon my honor, I don't," said Sneak. "Don't fire, I beg of you, Joe. If you do, we're dead men, and our horses'll be dead horses. He'll pitch the critters as high as the trees yonder, and he'll trample us under the earth. Look at his furious red eyes."

Joe looked again and quaked. The huge bull, who had been deliberately chewing his cud, ceased the rumination; and, standing as motionless as a tower, glared madly at the strangers, while a low but deep sound of warning came forth from his mouth. The men were not more than twenty paces distant, Joe still a little in advance. Their horses trembled, and seemed inclined to fly.

"It's a king bull," said Sneak, his eyes larger than ever, and his neck wonderfully elongated.

"Well, if he is, said Joe, striving to evince a proper degree of courage after his encounter with the grizzly bears, "my horse is Devil Dick, and knows how to kick and bite, both."

"I wish he was not so close to us," said Sneak.

"It is rather close," said Joe, steadily pulling the reins. But as Dick backed slightly, the bull made one step in advance, and then scraped up the earth with his right foot, the sod flying in the air, and falling all over his back.

"Don't back out, or he'll dash right at us," cried Sneak. "Jest look him straight in the eye; that's the only hope, now."

"I can't, Sneak," said Joe, "it frightens me."

"I can," said Sneak, "and that'll frighten him. Don't you know a man's eye will frighten a lion sometimes?"

"No, and I don't believe it, either," said Joe, striving to fix a steady gaze at the eyes of the monster. "I wish you'd make haste and frighten him, Sneak, for I'm tired of waiting. Are you sure he'd run after us if we were to retreat?"

"Sartain; and he'd run over us, and make mince meat of us. But if we ketch his eye awhile, and then go towards him, he'll turn tail and run."

"Then do you come in front of me, for I don't understand how to manage him."

"Be steady. Let me pass without moving our eyes," said Sneak, and at the same time urging his horse a few paces forward. The bull lifted his head and looked over his shoulder. "Now," said Sneak, "holler like the d—l, and foller me." Uttering a most unearthly whoop, he spurred his horse violently towards the animal; and, as he expected, the bull wheeled round and ran across the prairie. "Stop," he cried, when Joe, after a pause, fired off a volley of discordant whoops, and cantered his horse after the bull, now several hundred yards in advance; "what're you hollering for now?"

"I want to frighten him so bad he won't come back again," said Joe; "or if he does, he'll know he must run when he hears my voice; and I'll spatter some shot on him." He threw up his gun and fired—and, being unsteady in the saddle, the rebound lifted him out of it, and the next moment he was standing on his feet near his horse's tail—Dick having stopped suddenly upon hearing the report of the gun.

"Are you hurt, Joe?" asked Sneak, who joined him soon after.

"No, Sneak—it didn't kick much—but my foot got out of the stirrup. I think that bull will keep out of my way in future."

"I think," said Sneak, "if you aint a fool you'll keep out of his way in futer. Why didn't you dash up toward him when I did?"

"My horse wouldn't go—and so it was'nt my fault. But I whooped louder than you did."

"Whooped! It was bellering. If it had'nt been for me, he'd've taken you for another bull, and made fight. You're not up to the mark yet, Joe."

"Now, Sneak, don't slur at my bravery. The day's gone by for that. Didn't I intend to fire right into his front, when we stood face to face?"

"You didn't know any better."

"And you had'nt the nerve to do it. That was the reason you wouldn't let me shoot. I believe I would've killed him—and we shall want buffalo robes this winter."

"Whew! But I'm not sure there's any winter here. The bucks aint runnin' and scrapin' much yit, and its gitting late in November. Are you loaded? If so, mount your horse. Yonder's an elk."

The elk was at a considerable distance beyond the opening in which the buffalo had been found, and was grazing very quietly, with his great horns standing out like young trees.

"You may shoot him, Sneak," said Joe; "I didn't hold my musket tightly against my shoulder, when I shot the buffalo, and it gave me a smart kick. I didn't feel it at the time, but it's a little sore now. Besides, it's your time to shoot, as I'm one ahead."

Sneak paused, and merely smiled contemptuously. Then spurring his horse, and making a slight detour, so as to approach the animal unobserved, still followed closely by Joe, he soon attained the necessary proximity for execution. Letting the reins fall on his horse's neck, he took deliberate aim and fired. The elk leaped up in the air—but did not fall as Sneak anticipated. And instead

of running away, it came directly towards the hunters. With these animals, as with deer, they never seem to have any idea from what direction the report of a gun proceeds; and if they do not see or scent the person firing at them, they are just as likely to run towards him as away from him. And the rapid approach of a heavily antlered buck elk is by no means a pleasing spectacle. This was the opinion of Joe, and so he wheeled his horse and fled out into the prairie, closely followed by the wounded elk, while Sneak, who was concealed behind a pine bush, remained an immovable, but not a silent spectator.

"Shoot, Joe; dod rot it, why don't you shoot? Don't let the tarnation thing rip open your horse's bowels."

"Soon both Joe and the elk were out of hearing, and also out of sight, for a rise in the prairie intervened. But before Sneak had reloaded his rifle, preparatory to pursuing them, they came in sight again, having made a short circuit, in another direction. The elk seemed intent on revenge, and all Joe could do was to endeavor to keep out of his way.

"Don't shoot, Sneak," cried Joe, seeing Sneak about to raise his gun. "Don't shoot," he repeated, as well as he could, "or you'll hit me;" and as he uttered these words he turned towards the place occupied by him when Sneak had fired, and where the latter still remained. On he came, hotly pursued by the elk, which bled profusely at every leap—and, finally, the wounded animal fell and expired within twenty feet of the one who had shot him. Sneak gave the signal blast for the wagon, and then proceeded to dress the animal in silence.

"I was'n't afraid of him, Sneak," said Joe, after a protracted silence; "I saw he was killed and knew he would soon fall, and I did'n't want to waste my ammunition."

"You be dod rot!" said Sneak. "Dead or livin', if he'd got one fair job at you, he'd have let day light through both you and your horse."

"Then the next time you make such a slovenly shot at an elk," said Joe, "I would thank you not to let him run after me again."

"My gun hung fire that time," said Sneak, "and I hit him a little too low. But whose bar was it run arter me? Every body must take care of themselves in sich hunts as these."

The operation of preparing the game for the wagon was soon performed, and then, according to the rule suggested by Glenn, all other game was to be conveyed on horses to where the largest animal had fallen. So it was determined to kill enough to fill the wagon—and Sneak and Joe remounted, and separated temporarily, in quest of further sport. Sneak's rifle was heard soon after.

"I mus'nt let him get ahead of me," said Joe, peering in every direction among the bushes. "I must keep up the good name I've earned this day," he continued; "and yonder's something now," he added, seeing the gray hair of an animal beyond a patch of rank grass. "He's lying down, and don't see me," said he, "and I'll get down, too, and make sure work of it." He dismounted noiselessly, and crept softly towards his fore-doomed victim, with his gun in readiness to fire if it should run. "It don't see me yet," continued he, mentally, "and, as I'm so close he can't escape me, I'll see how near I can get." Thus he proceeded, until he was within a few feet of it, and then taking deliberate aim, he made the woods roar with the report, for he had put in a large charge after encountering the buffalo bull. The muzzle flew up, turning a somerset over his shoulder, and Joe's back struck the earth.

"Confound it!" said he; "but it was my own fault. The bull made me put too much in; and I'm glad I was'nt on Dick. Besides, I fell in a soft place, and it didn't hurt. Now for the deer," said he, leaping up.

It lay just where it was when he fired, literally torn to pieces. It was a mere fawn, lean and diseased, and did not weigh twenty pounds.

"Plague take it!" said Joe; "the thing's not worth the powder and lead, let alone the tumble; and the meat and skin are both spoilt. My goodness! what a powerful shooting gun my old musket is. I wouldn't swap it for two of Sneak's rifles, for it's a safe gun. It's a buck any how," he continued, lifting up what remained of the poor fawn. "But I'm a hamed to take it in

Sneak's sight—and he'll be there at the elk with his big buck, no doubt. What shall I do? Ha!" he exclaimed, looking behind, whence a cry not unfamiliar to his ears proceeded. "My gracious! it's a skunk! and it's coming right at me." He let the fawn fall and ran towards his horse—seizing the bridle and looking back, he beheld the little animal in full pursuit. "And my gun's not loaded. Oh, Mr. Boone, I forgot your advice! But I must run;" so mounting Dick he put spurs to him and galloped away towards the dead elk, where Sneak had arrived a few moments before, with a fat doe.

"Run, Sneak, run! Run, Sneak, run!" cried Joe, spurring and whipping through the bushes.

"What is it? Another dod rotted bar?" asked Sneak, as Joe dashed past him; and all Joe responded was "run, run!" Not doubting it was a bear, a buffalo, or a panther, Sneak sprang upon his horse and followed Joe at full speed, and overtook him in the prairie. Then Joe drew rein, and looked back for the first time since his exit from the woods.

"Is he coming, Sneak?" he asked, seeing the large eyes of his companion indicated great trepidation, or some other unusual emotion.

"Now tell me what it was," said Sneak, seizing the bridle of Dick.

"Have'nt you seen it yet?" asked Joe.

"No. Did you? Or did you jest think you heard it?"

"I did—I'll swear to it."

"Don't swear to it, or I'll not b'lieve you. How close did it come to you?"

"I didn't let it get nearer than twenty yards: but it was coming at me before I mounted—"

"Stop! You was on the ground?"

"Where do you think I was? Where were you?"

"Cutting the throat of my fat doe."

"And I was cutting the throat of my—buck."

"Let me see your knife."

"You are very inquisitive," said Joe, drawing his knife, which he had stained afresh in anticipation of such a catechism; "but there's the proof."

"I heard you shoot, Joe," said Sneak; "but I didn't think you could kill a buck by yourself, unless you got him to stand behind your gun."

"Sneak, do you mean to insult me?" asked Joe, willing, on reflection, to evade the subject of the cause of his affright, and meditating a lie to get out of the difficulty. But it occurred to him, if he were to say it was a panther, or bear, or buffalo, or Indian, Sneak would never be satisfied until he had inspected the "sign" of him, i. e., his tracks.

"No—I don't mean to make you mad, Joe—but I can have my joke."

"And can't I have mine?" asked Joe, quickly.

"Sartinly. Now, you've got your breath, tell me what it was made you run so."

"Say *us*, Sneak."

"Well, *us*, then—and I b'lieve it's the first time I ever did run without knowing what I was running from—and I don't half like it."

"Let us go back a little," said Joe, turning his horse; "but keep a good look out."

"What was it—can't you tell me?" said Sneak, with his great eyes fixed on the place where they emerged from the bushes, and his rifle in readiness to fire.

"Wait till I finish loading," said Joe, ramming down the last wadding, and priming his gun.

"Why didn't you load before you cut your buck's throat?" asked Sneak.

"I forgot it."

"You got the buck-ager after killing the buck—new hunters are dead sure to do it. But whar did you hit him?"

"All over," said Joe; "every shot struck him."

"No wonder he fell," said Sneak. "I 'speat you found him asleep, and put your gun agin him, and spoilt the meat and hide

both. But what did you run from? I don't see anything," he continued, as they returned towards the edge of the woods, "'cept that tarnation little cat."

"Where?" cried Joe—"yes—there it is—and it's coming right at us," said Joe, in new alarm, and turning to fly.

"Dod rot it!" said Sneak, "it's only a pole-cat. Joe, is that the thing you run from?"

"Say *we*, Sneak—didn't you run, too?"

"I didn't see it."

"I did. I would scorn to run from anything I didn't see."

"Blast your skin!" said Sneak, in a burst of anger.

"It was a good joke, Sneak—but I didn't intend to make you mad."

"I suppose I must swallow it," said Sneak, half aside, "but it goes agin the grain. Why didn't you run arter the pole cat?"

"Because he ran after me."

"Of course he did, when you retreated—they always do. But they always retreat when you make a dash at 'em, like the black snakes. Try it, make a splurge at that feller, and you'll see how quick he'll turn tail and run."

"I'd rather not, Sneak. I hav'nt forgot the scrape you once got me into with one of the same sweet family—and this affair of running is but a slight retaliation."

"Re- what? You are always larning big words. Talian, I guess, means something about the pole-cat's tail, and I'm not afraid of it. See," and he dashed towards the little animal, which was still advancing; but seeing himself menaced, he turned and fled for his life. "That's the way, Joe, to get rid of 'em. He won't come in striking distance of us again."

They were now before the elk again, and the wagon was approaching. Cæsar was in advance of it, and Joe whispered something in his ear.

"Go, and bring your buck," said Sneak, approaching Joe and Cæsar.

"No—not yit," said Joe, "let 'em load these first, and they can drive to the buck afterwards."

"Is he a big one?" asked Sneak.

"I have seen as large ones," said Joe. "The niggers can put him in the wagon. But we hav'nt got a load yet, and Mr. Rough-grove said this morning, it would be as well for us to lay in a good supply of meat. Mr. Glenn has made several barrels of salt, so nothing will be lost. Come on, let's kill a couple more."

Joe led the way and Sneak followed. When they had gone a few hundred paces, they heard a tremendous thumping in the brambles on the left, among the trees near the edge of the prairie.

"What's that?" asked Joe, arresting his horse.

"I know the sound," said Sneak; "it's a doe, chased, I reckon, by a buck."

"It is, by jing!" said Joe, as the doe sprang out in a clear place and leaped on across the little avenue the hunters were traversing.

"Are you going to shoot at it runnin'?" asked Sneak, as he heard Joe cock his musket. Sneak could sometimes kill a deer running, with his rifle, but he preferred to have it stand.

"Yes," cried Joe, blazing away, without lifting the gun to his shoulder or taking any aim. In truth, it went off before he was ready—for Sneak had so filed the lock that the merest touch of the trigger sufficed. Thus Joe escaped a kicking this time—and, by the merest accident in the world, the charge took effect. The doe, in full career, was stricken through the heart—and whirling over, it made a complete revolution like a wheel, and lay extended on the grass.

Sneak spurred up to Joe, and looked him steadily in the face.

"What are you staring at?" demanded Joe.

"Was that luck, or are you larnin' to shoot? That's what I want to know," said Sneak.

"Call it just what you like, Sneak," said Joe, dismounting and deliberately re-charging his gun. "As for learning to shoot, and to hunt," said he, ramming down a wad, "it's a silly question to ask me, after knowing what you know, that I took lessons from Daniel Boone. Cut the deer's throat for me, Sneak."

"Wait a minute, till the buck comes," said Sneak, "and I make him stop and stand till I shoot him, and then we'll go together."

But no buck came. The doe had been started by Glenn and William Roughgrove, who were coming across the forest towards the wagon, each bearing a fine buck before him on his horse. The sound of hoofs attracting the ears of Sneak, he ceased to wait for his buck, and accompanied Joe to the prostrate doe, and aided in preparing the animal for transportation.

Meantime, Glenn and William, seeing the wagon at the scene of Joe's recent encounter with the skunk, rode thither and disencumbered their horses of their burdens.

"Who killed that, Pompey?" asked William, gazing at the mangled and mutilated fawn.

"Can't tell you, massa William," said Pompey, showing his array of ivory; "but dis nigger, when he goes hunting in the arternoon, 'll shoot bigger game den dat."

"If you don't, Pompey," said Glenn, "you'll have slim dinners afterwards. If you look at the thing, William," he continued "you need not ask what gun destroyed it."

"True," said William; "Joe's mark is upon it, and a most barbarous spectacle it is. But here come Joe and Sneak themselves and the former is bearing the fat doe we saw."

"Yes, and Joe killed it running," said Joe, "and it was fifty yards off."

"It's true," said Sneak, marking the incredulity of Glenn "Joe's in luck to-day. He's had more shots than any of us, and has missed but once."

"Missed but once!" cried Joe, after depositing his doe in the wagon in such manner, with Cæsar's assistance, as to conceal the little buck. "I deny it, and I challenge the proof. Mr. Glenn we met a tremendous big buffalo bull, and Sneak was afraid to shoot it, when it was within twenty yards of us, and standing still."

"He did right," said William.

"May be so," continued Joe; "but when the bull ran away, I put spurs after him, and gave him a blizzard he'll not forget soon

I'll swear I hit him. I saw a cloud of dust rise from his long hair when I fired."

"I won't dispute that some of your shot dusted his coat," said Sneak, "for he was two hundred yards off, and at that distance the old musket will scatter over a half acre in breadth—but the shot didn't even tickle him."

"That's not my fault, if it's true," said Joe, "and you can't prove it."

"But I see you have been down on your back again, Joe," said Glenn, observing the dirt on his hunting shirt.

"Yes—it was shooting the buck; I thought it was a soft fall."

"And it was the buffalo that made the bed for you," said Sneak, laughing.

"Counfound him!" said Joe, looking over his shoulder and perceiving what they alluded to. "The next time I find him I will run him down, and have his robe to sleep under this winter."

"But whar's the buck?" asked Sneak, riding up to the wagon and counting the animals.

"There," said William, leaning over and rolling the doe aside.

"That!" cried Sneak; "that's a piece of a rabbit. Do you call that a buck, Joe?" he continued, lifting up the remains of the fawn.

"I do—what do you call it? Is it a doe?"

"Dod rot your skin!" said Sneak; "that was the reason you wouldn't bring it. I wish you had been kicked down face foremost, for shooting sich a thing as this."

"I didn't see it plain, Sneak," said Joe. "I thought it was laying down, when it was standing up. And when I found out the mistake, I supposed you'd be for joking me, so I got ahead of you with the skunk." The party then returned to the valley.

CHAPTER VI.

SABBATH—WILD HORSES—THE SNAKE FIGHT—THE INDIANS—
RED EAGLE.

The next day being Sunday, the services of the church were duly performed in the Chapel, or room so called, in one of the extreme wings of the mansion. Mr. Roughgrove had been ordained a deacon during his residence in Virginia, and had been constituted a missionary, by the Bishop, to reside among the Indians.

Not a cloud was in the heavens. Not a breath of air disturbed the foliage. The temperature was pleasant in the glorious sunshine; and even the birds, on that happy Sabbath morning, seemed to gambol on the wing and to strain their tiny throats in grateful melody. The earth, the air, the sky, everything, animate and inanimate, as Mr. Roughgrove said in his sermon to his white friends, and to his black friends, the slaves, seemed, on that bright and balmy morning in the wilderness, to declare the beneficence of God, the great Creator and Giver of all good things.

When the services were ended, Glenn ascended the tower. This was a precautionary measure; and it was a rule for some one to go thither every hour, and gaze over the surrounding country.

He returned immediately, with delighted interest in his looks, and taking the children by the hand, and beckoning the rest to follow, reascended the stairway to the lofty summit.

"Oh," cried Charley, leaping up, and dancing, and clapping his hands.

"Catch one, pa!" cried Jule, manifesting the ecstasy she felt, by her smiles and exclamations.

A considerable number of wild horses, during the service, had entered the delta from the forest on the west; and a portion of them attracted by the domestic animals grazing on the eastern side of the palisaded enclosure, had gone thither, and were now, apparently, holding a conference with them. Their noses were mutually

advanced, and their mouths were in motion, as if really whispering together. Their necks were arched, their tails were lifted, and their steps were lofty, as if to make as imposing an appearance as possible.

"I'll have the beautiful black and white colt!" cried Charley. "Can't you catch him, pa?"

"Not by chasing, Charley," said William, "for, when they are a week old, they can run as fast as the grown horses."

"Is that so, William?" asked Mary.

"It is so said, and I do not doubt it," he replied. "And I believe it is the same thing with our tame horses."

While the horses were exchanging friendly greetings, the colts amused themselves playing round them, and chasing each other with a fleetness, that convinced even little Charley it would be a difficult matter to catch one in a race.

"But where is the General?" asked Glenn, looking in vain for the large white horse, of the most majestic proportions.

"There!" said William, pointing in the opposite direction, on the west of the enclosure. He stood some three or four hundred paces distant, gazing alternately at the detachment, mostly mares and colts, that had ventured down to the eastern extremity of the delta, and at the palisade enclosure. Near him were several other horses of noble dimensions, and several half-grown ones, of his own spotless hue.

"Look, Mary—and La-u-na!" said Glenn.

"Beautiful," said La-u-na.

"Grand," said Mary. "How stately and majestic his attitude! Look, Charley and Juliet. Did you ever see so beautiful an animal as that?"

"Never," cried they. "But ma," said Juliet, "I should be afraid to ride him, he looks so strong."

"Truly," said old Mr. Roughgrove, "it is a noble animal, and the handsomest of the brute creation."

"Mr. Glenn, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, coming up hastily—"may I shoot him? I've got an ounce bullet, and my musket can kill him at that distance. His skin can be stuffed, and ——"

"Joe," said Glenn, "if you were to fire at that horse, or at any of them, I would order Cæsar to burn the wood of your musket, and to make horse shoes of the iron. And what is more, you should not have another gun for twelve months."

"Dod rot it, didn't I tell you so?" said Sneak, who had followed Joe.

"Shut your mouth," said Joe. "I didn't mean any harm, Mr. Glenn," he continued. "I don't want to break the law; but I thought little Charley would like to have a stuffed horse, and such a pretty one as that."

"No he wouldn't," said Juliet; but he would like to have a live colt. Don't hurt any of 'em Joe—please don't shoot 'em, for they're prettier than our tame horses."

"I won't hurt a hair of their backs, Miss Juliet."

"Go, Joe," said Glenn. "I know you had no wicked motive. Reserve your ounce bullet for the buffalo or the Indians. The horses are animals of too high an order ever to be shot like common game."

"There, Sneak," said Joe, retreating hastily. "The Indians are coming. I know it. Mr. Glenn said Indians, to prepare me for 'em. I know him, better than you do. But I'm not afraid."

After gazing many minutes, during which the white steed did not once lower his head to pluck the rich grass growing between his feet, he uttered a prolonged neigh, which attracted the attention of the distant stragglers, and they came trotting up the valley immediately. The colts soon outstripped the rest, and seemed to contend for mastery in speed. They came very near the house, and the spectators in the tower had a fair view of them as they careered past the enclosure.

"Oh, they're just like the circus ponies," said Juliet.

"Faster, prettier," said Charley.

Before the mares had come up even with the house, the colts had reached the grand white horse which had given the signal. They ran up to him and lifted their mouth to his, as if in salutation; and he seemed pleased with the attention. And when the mares passed by, he still stood with his head towards the east, gazing at Joe's

Dick, a heavy built, docile iron gray stallion, which had been amusing himself with his awkward gallantries. Dick, upon seeing the stranger awaiting his approach, stopped fifty paces short of him.

"He backs his ears, pa," said Charley.

"And Dick understands it," said William.

"Is there not danger that Joe's pet may be handled rather roughly?" asked Glenn.

"Not if he is submissive," said William. "I have often seen the meeting of wild horses with domestic ones; and the latter rarely suffer injury unless they are the aggressors."

"The wild ones are the noblest," said Juliet.

"Certainly," said Glenn. "They are of pure Arabian descent, their progenitors being brought over by the Spanish Cavaliers. They conquered Montezuma's country, and if this did not improve the stock of man, they left in the wilderness an undegenerate breed of horses."

Dick refusing to follow the mares and colts any further, and seeming disinclined to exchange salutations with the leader of the drove, the white horse, while his company pursued their way towards the upper end of the valley, very deliberately, and with dignity in every step, advanced towards the stranger. Dick seemed to crouch and tremble, and did not dare to turn and attempt to escape. The noble animal of the prairie walked quite up to him, and then around him, and smelt his mouth, his neck and his back, while poor Dick seemed submissive from fear. Then giving him a nip in the shoulder, which made Dick yell in pain and turn and fly, the noble animal likewise turned towards his family, and neighing loudly, exhibited a specimen of his speed, by seeming to fly upon the wings of the wind. In a few moments he was at the head of his company, and then falling into a more moderate pace, he led them into the forest, beyond the island.

"The next time they come," said William, they will be less fearful, because we have not sought to catch or kill any of them."

"But won't they catch or kill some of us, Mither William?" asked Biddy, who had been hitherto a silent, but interested spectator of the novel scene.

"No, Biddy," said he. "They never attack any of the human kind. Even the noble leader of the troop would run away from Charley or Juliet, if he were to meet either of them alone in the prairie."

"I see them now, in the high prairie, on the right of the forest," said Mr. Roughgrove. "And now, my children," he continued, "as God has given us so lovely a Sabbath for our enjoyment, let us walk forth and manifest our grateful appreciation of the boon. And I will show you some of the wonderful works of Providence which have escaped the eyes of William and Glenn, notwithstanding they have been out on exploring expeditions."

"Probably," said Glenn, "your discoveries were made on foot, and where horsemen could not go."

"True," said Roughgrove. "Come, let us repair to the scene. Mary and La-u-na, Charley and Jule, Biddy and all."

They descended to the area in the rear of the house, where they found Joe, with his Dick, under the persimmon trees. Joe was in a furious passion, washing and swabbing his shoulder, where the blood still run from the bite of the wild horse.

"You make more fuss over it, Joe," said Sneak, "than you did over the bite you got on the leg from Pete's shadow. Maybe it was only the shadow of the critter that bit Dick."

"I wish you'd take your shadow away from here," said Joe, "before I spoil it. Don't fret me, Sneak, this quiet Sunday morning, after the sermon we've heard."

"It was a good sarmon, Joe," said Sneak, "and it made me feel fifty pounds lighter. But what's the use of Mr. Roughgrove putting on a white gown out here?"

"Ask him yourself, Sneak, and don't trouble me. Still, I can say, I wouldn't give one of them green persimmons for a bushel of sermon's if the priest didn't wear something more than common people. And Biddy thinks so too."

"Put up your horse, Joe, and come with us," said Glenn.

"And may I take my gun, Mr. Glenn?" asked Joe, giving Dick a slap that sent him trotting off to the stable.

"Certainly, Joe," said Glenn. "William and I have our rifles,

No man, except Mr. Roughgrove, is ever to leave the enclosure, day or night, week or Sunday, without his gun."

"And is Sneak to go too?" asked Joe.

"No. You and he might quarrel, and that may be prevented on Sunday, by keeping you apart."

"And may I take Pete?"

"No. Fasten him securely. I want to see the other Pete, alone, if I can."

"And so do I, Mr. Glenn, and I want you, if you please, to run up a silver dollar I've got, into a bullet, for me to shoot him with."

"Pa," said Jule, "I heard Biddy tell him the other Pete could'n't e killed, if he didn't shoot him with a silver bullet."

"That's Biddy's superstitious nonsense, my child," said Glenn, "and you must not believe a word of it. The dog is a real dog, and no ghost, Biddy," he added, when the nurse came within hearing, leading Charley; "ghost must be killed, if at all, with silver bullets, but did you ever see one Biddy, after it was killed?"

"Niver, Misther Glenn. But me father kilt one in Connaught, and I would'nt look at it, at all."

"What did your father say it looked like?" asked Mary.

"A great big saal, Misthress Glenn, and it cum up out of the say."

"No doubt," said Glenn. "But, Joe, you must understand that this little strange dog is not to be molested. If it were not that you say he is fat, I would have him fed every day. No doubt he belonged to a christian master, who is either dead or lost. He can do no harm."

"But he bit me," said Joe.

"And you deserved it, for throwing him so rudely on the ground," said Glenn.

They proceeded along the margin of the brook on the northern side of the island, until they reached a place where a flat piece of timber had been lain across the shining stream. They passed over, and following the guidance of old Mr. Roughgrove, ascended to the summit of the hill above the great cave.

The children were wild with delight in the glorious sunshine, and ran hither and thither plucking the flowers. La-u-na and Marv

partaking of their glee, followed them only to warn them against the tempting berries that were unwholesome, and the thorns that often environed the rarest blossoms.

"And now," said Mr. Roughgrove, with recovered breath, after clambering up the ascent, "we are approaching the scene of my discovery." He led the way by a narrow path into what seemed a dense and almost impenetrable thicket of bushes and brambles.

"Of course we did not ride in here," said Glenn.

"But we skirted it," said William, "and here are the tracks of our horses, along the edge."

"That's Dick's track," said Joe; "I know it by the split in the hoof."

"Behold!" said Mr. Roughgrove, parting the branches of a mulberry tree, whose large leaves had obscured the objects beyond.

"Mercy on us!" said Mary, starting back.

"Hold me, or I'll fall," cried Joe, backing out as well as he could.

"There is no danger," said La-u-na, holding her little Charles by the hand.

They stood near the brink of an immense chasm, of almost unfathomable depth. It was some thirty feet in width at the surface, and extended more than fifty paces in length. It ran from east to west, transversing the direction of the cave, with which, from the location, there might be some communication. But the objects which attracted the most attention, were the immense pieces of mica or isinglass, that seemed to have been divided by the convulsion of nature which produced the chasm, leaving great vertical plates, most of spotless transparency, on either hand. The sun was shining resplendently against them on the side opposite to where the party stood, and they beheld, or fancied they saw, vegetation, and particularly fruit and flowers in caverns beyond, as if the enormous plates had been placed there by man, to concentrate the rays of the sun on plants too delicate to withstand the blasts of winter.

"Mary," said Glenn, his wife clinging to his arm, "does it not seem to you that bushes and flowers are growing on the other side

of the windows, or mirrors, or whatever may be the most proper designation of the wonderful specimens of mica?"

"Truly there seems to be vegetation, green and rank, beyond the plates." La-u-na, William, and the children bore the same testimony. And Joe swore to it—for he could see great bunches of grapes, larger than any of the wild ones, through the glass, just as plainly as he could feel the nose on his face.

"I thought so, too," said Mr. Roughgrove, "when I stood here yesterday, but as it might possibly be an optical illusion, I said nothing about it. But who knows there are not chambers in the great cave, extending this far from the valley, and why should they not have mica walls as well as partitions of granite or slate. But come with me further along the margin. You have not beheld their full extent."

He led the way by a well-beaten deer or wild goat path, where a regular growth of young cedars, forming a natural balustrade, protected them from falling.

The plates of mica extended, with inconsiderable intervals, the entire length of the chasm. In some places they were perpendicular, and in others inclined sixty or seventy degrees, resembling the exterior of an immense hot-house. Between the ledges dividing the different masses of mica, several streams of smoking waters gushed forth, as if fresh from the volcanic fires that heated them; and the rumbling of a stream of considerable volume was heard far below, beyond the reach of vision.

"No doubt," said William, "the chasm communicates with the cave, for it is probable the hot spring has its source in this vicinity.

"Look!" cried La-u-na, pointing to a niche in the cliff opposite, some ten feet in diameter, where a very large rattlesnake was coiled. His head and tail were both erect, and his rattle sounded thrillingly a moment afterwards.

"We are beyond his reach," said William, holding Charley, who gazed at the scene in silent awe.

"Don't shoot, Joe," said Glenn, seeing Joe taking aim at the reptile.

"Oh, my goodness. It's the biggest sort of a rattlesnake, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, with the biggest sort of eyes.

"Well, suppose it is—it can't harm us at that distance," said Glenn; "besides it is never an aggressor—is it William?"

"No," said William. "It acts only on the defensive, and it gives warning."

"But there's another snake," cried Joe. "I see two more; great long black snakes."

"And they are not venomous," said William, "but they often kill the rattlesnakes."

"And it is not us for whom the warning is designed," said La-u-na, "but for the blacksnakes. See, one of them is about to attack the rattlesnake."

This was true. But in endeavoring to seize the rattlesnake by the neck he missed the mark, and received its fangs about midway of his body. He sprang up several feet in the air, and glided away as quickly as possible, beyond the reach of his foe, who still maintained his coil, and soon after turned over on his back and expired. The other black snake was more circumspect, and for a long time glided round the rattlesnake, keeping out of his reach. The latter kept his glittering eye upon him, at first, but seemed to lose his steady gaze as the other increased his speed. Then making a quick spring, the black snake succeeded in catching his antagonist by the back of his head, and thus prevented him from striking. He then, with almost inconceivable rapidity, wrapped himself round the much thicker body of the rattlesnake, and by a sudden muscular action, elongated himself on the rock, when the separation of the vertebre of his victim could be distinctly heard. Releasing his hold, the conqueror moved slowly away, leaving the rattlesnake quite dead.

"Hurrah for the black snake," cried Joe. "I'll never kill another."

"If one should get round your neck, Joe," said William, "and separate the joints, by straightening himself, perhaps you would never hurra for another"

"Oh, don't talk so, if you please," said Joe, "it makes me choke to think of it."

"I have no doubt," said Glenn, "a great many snakes repair hither at this season of the year. They go into the cliffs for refuge in the winter, and perhaps they derive warmth from the vicinity of the hot water flowing through the rocks. You must be very watchful, Biddy."

"Oh, Misther Glenn," said she, shivering in dread, "you didn't tell me the nasty things would ate me, or I would niver 've come out here."

"They don't eat anybody, Biddy," said Joe, striving to comfort her; "but they bite, sometimes. Don't be afraid—I'll guard you. I ain't afraid of anything; and Mr. Boone used to say when a person wasn't afraid, he wasn't in danger. Don't be afraid, Biddy."

"Don't cry, Biddy," said Juliet.

"No—look at me," said Charley, "I'm not afraid."

The party then followed Mr. Roughgrove round to the opposite side of the chasm, and they found the walls on the South side similar to the others, the mica being exfoliated by the parting of the earth and rocks

While they were gazing at this singular freak of nature, Joe, who had lingered a little behind, plucking some delicious grapes, joined them in a most unexpected manner. He came tearing through the bushes and vines in a frightful condition. His hands were up, his face as pale as dough, and his eyes and mouth wide open. He rushed to where the party stood in amazement, and without uttering a word, fell prostrate on his face.

"What is the matter?" cried Glenn, striding to where he lay, and seizing him by the collar, turned him over.

Joe's eyes and mouth were still wide open, but he uttered no reply. Nevertheless, he pointed towards the bush upon which the grapevine was growing. William walked in that direction, and discovered, several hundred paces distant, on a knoll in the prairie, a solitary Indian. He stood perfectly still, gazing in the direction of the chasm. His arms were folded, and his bow and quiver were be-

hind him. William made a gesture of friendly salutation, which was understood and responded to by the Indian.

"There is no danger," said William, to his party, as they came to where he stood. "That chief has no evil design, else it would have been manifested before this. You need not hesitate to come out in view of him, for no doubt he has seen us all, keeping himself and his party unseen."

"Can you be sure there is no danger, William?" asked Mary, clinging to Glenn, and pressing Juliet to her side.

"Quite sure, Mary," said he; "he is not painted for war—but rather for worship. I will speedily learn more."

William advanced alone some forty paces, and in full view of the Indian, laid his rifle on the ground. The Indian did the same with his bow. Then the two continued to advance until they met. Their greeting was a very hearty one, as seen from a distance, but their words could not be heard.

"Misther Back," said Bidzy, who had been left at the chasm with Joe, and now came forward with him towards the group at the edge of the prairie, after hearing William's declaration that there was no danger. "Misther Back, I thought you said you wasn't afraid of anything?"

"Me, Bidzy? Did I? But I ain't. Who thought I was afraid?"

"I did, Mr. Back. You was as pale as a candle, and you couldn't spake at all."

"Me? It was a mistake, Miss Bidzy, I give you my word and honor I was only uneasy for the little children and you, Bidzy. I thought what a horrid act it would be to see the poor little children and their beautiful nurse scalped and tomahawked by the bloody savages, and I turned pale on their account and on yourn, Bidzy. That was all. I hadn't a bit of fear for myself. Why should I? I've been in their clutches many a time. I'll tell you all about it some of these days."

"Did they scalp you, Mr. Back? Let me see."

"No—but they were going to—only they were disturbed."

"But you couldn't spake, Mr. Back, when you tumbled, and give us warning to hide."

"Couldn't speak! Why, Miss Biddy, you don't understand me any better than Sneak. It was my superior prudence, my tact and skill. I didn't want to speak—because I didn't want the Indians, who I thought might be enemies, to hear me. But didn't I point silently at 'em, and didn't Mr. William understand me, and go out and see who it was? He knows 'em all—and it's a lucky thing it's a friendly chief at their head. But the hostile ones will come, and then you'll see whose's afraid."

"Will they come, Mr. Back?"

"To be sure they will, Biddy. What do you think I brought my musket all the way out here for, if it wasn't to fight?"

"Och, and I won't stay to have the top of me head cut off. I'll give Mr. Glenn warning."

"Warning?"

"Yes. I'll lave."

"Why, Biddy, how can you leave us? There isn't another white man or white woman in a thousand miles of us. The Indians would scalp you, the rattlesnakes would bite you, and the wolves and the grizzleys would tear you, and hug you a hundred times before you could go half way back." Biddy shed tears; and then Joe sought to comfort her, pledging himself to protect her, and to die a hundred times before a hair of her head should suffer.

Now all eyes were turned in the direction of the chief and William, who were conferring in the prairie, and the latter, after the exchange of a few speeches with the chief, called to La-u-na in the Indian language, to join them.

La-u-na, who had been regarding the noble form of the chief in silence, no sooner heard the words of her husband, than she placed little Charley's hand in Juliet's, and then bounded away over the prairie. The chief strode forward to meet her, and clasped her in his brawny arms, while the long feathers on his head fell over her neck. ●

"The Trembling Fawn," exclaimed the chief.

"Red Eagle—my uncle!" cried La-u-na. Although La-u-na's mother had been the wife of one said to be a white man, she was, nevertheless, the sister of the Red Eagle, the highest chief, and

greatest king of the Camanches, one of the most powerful tribes on the continent. He had come, with the prophet of his nation, to make one of their customary offerings to the White Spirit of the valley—a spirit, which, he said, was revered also by the Apaches, with whom the Camanches were at war—but that the valley was neutral ground between the hostile nations, and in which neither of them were permitted by the White Spirit to kill any game, as it was reserved for a portion of the hunting grounds beyond the grave, where wars and scalping would be at an end.

William assured him that no game had been killed by his white friends in the valley, and the chief seemed delighted to hear it—for if they were to molest the animals there, both the Camanches and the Apaches might be bound to make war on them. The Apaches, he feared would do so, nevertheless, if not controlled by the White Spirit of the cave—and they could not be restrained even by the White Spirit, if it were known that La-u-na was his niece.

La-u-na said they should never know it; and she begged her uncle to guard their abode. She then beckoned Mary and the rest to approach.

“Come, Joe,” said Glenn, “put down your gun beside mine.”

“There is no danger,” said Mr. Roughgrove, taking the hands of Juliet and Charley.

“I believe you, grandpa,” said Jule, but shrinking and trembling even in her confidence.

“I want to see him closer, Jule,” said little Charley. “Look at the silver on his breast—and his pretty plumes. I’m not afraid, grandpa.”

“I don’t see any use in our going, Biddy,” said Joe, hanging back. “We can’t understand their language—and can’t learn anything.”

“I want to see him, Mr. Back,” said Biddy, her curiosity excited by the gaudy trappings of the chief. “They say there’s no danger—and Charley’s not afraid.”

“Afraid? Nobody need be afraid,” said Joe. “I could whip that fellow with my fist. But what’s the use? I believe I’ll wait here, till you all come back.”

"Come on, Joe," cried Glenn.

"Come," said Mr. Roughgrove. "We must not let him suppose any one of our party mistrusts his professions of friendship. The Indians despise unfounded suspicion even more than cowardice."

"Mr. Roughgrove," said Joe, "I hope you don't think I have any cowardice, after all the terrible times I've had in the wilderness? I confess I was, when I first came to Missouri, a little skittish, because I didn't know any better then."

"You know better, now. You know, until the Indians learn the deceptions of white men, they never make false professions of friendship. I would rather trust in the honor of that chief, than in the honor of many of the chiefs of my own race."

"Take my arm, Biddy," said Joe, striding on. "It's bad walking amongst these gopher hills, and a snake might be in the way." The allusion to the snake sufficed; and Biddy seized his arm with a decided grasp.

When the party joined William and La-u-na, each of them in turn, beginning with Mr. Roughgrove, the eldest, advanced and received the extended hand of the tall and noble chief.

"Mr. Glenn," said Joe, in a whisper, after this ceremony was completed, "wouldn't it be well for us to make him a prisoner? We can catch him, easy."

"Joe," said Glenn, indignantly, "when will you cease to be a dunce? Look round in the grass."

Joe did look, and his mouth fell open. Not less than a dozen Indians were in view. They rose from their coverts, but without arms, and, at the bidding of William, came forward, with every manifestation of amity. Still, Joe was frightened, and seemed disposed to slink behind Biddy, who had dismissed her fears. Most of the Indians were aged chieftains and prophets, and all were decked in their richest habiliments.

William explained to those who were not familiar with the Indian tongue, that the king of the Camanches was the uncle of La-u-na—and that he had seen him during his captivity, and had been protected by him on several occasions of peril.

Little Charley was delighted with the gaudy trappings of the chief, and even little Juliet soon dismissed her fears.

In response to an invitation to the Indians to accompany the party to the house and partake of a feast, William, who interpreted for them, said it would be an infraction of a treaty with the Apaches, who doubtless kept spies always in the vicinity.

"But ask them," said Glenn, "if they will receive some presents from us." Glenn had provided an ample store of them.

"Gladly," said William, after communicating the inquiry.

"Will it be wrong to make these presents to-day?" Glenn asked of Mr. Roughgrove.

"No, my son, I think not. If it were necessary, we should be compelled to destroy life on the Sabbath, and how much better it is to preserve than to destroy?"

"Joe," said Glenn, writing rapidly with his pencil on a piece of paper, "run home and bring me these articles."

"I'm lame, Mr. Glenn," said Joe. "I hurt my ankle when I fell in the bushes. I ran in to give you notice of my discovery of the Indians ——"

"Cease your jargon," said Mr. Roughgrove. "William, ask the Red Eagle how long he will tarry in this neighborhood."

The reply was that it would depend on the movements of the Apaches, of which he received information from his spies every day. It was uncertain. The Red Eagle and his prophets would see the White Spirit at night, and then they would learn more. "The White Spirit," said William, "they inform me, is a living being whom they can see and touch; and he dwells in the cave. But if you have no objection, I will promise to meet them an hour hence, upon the brink of the chasm, with the presents."

This was agreed to, and Joe was relieved. But pretending not to be cognizant of the agreement, he set off, limping slightly, towards the valley.

"Stop, Joe," said Glenn, who had not heard his excuse distinctly. "William and I will ride over here with the presents. You need not go."

"I'm perfectly willing to go," said Joe, "only I can't run very

fast. But maybe when my blood gets a little warm, the lameness will leave me."

"Never mind, I say. We have made other arrangements."

"Oh, very well. Then I'll go with the rest."

As Joe returned towards the company, a very old Indian, whom he had almost trodden on in the rank grass, without seeing him, rose up and confronted him with a broad smile on his face.

"Who are you? And where did you come from?" exclaimed Joe.

"Me talk English," said the old man; "me once tie you to tree—me once going to burn you—and the long brave white man."

"You old rascal, you!" cried Joe, in a tremendous rage. "You pulled my hair, too. Now I'll have my revenge." He then threw down his cap and began to strip off his coat, when he was interrupted by Glenn.

"Would you fight a man over a hundred years old?" asked Glenn.

"No," said Joe, putting on his cap and coat again. "I didn't know he was that old. You never can tell how old these fellows are, because they shave off their hair, and of course it ain't gray. But, Mr. Glenn, he's strong. He's the one who pulled my hair out once, when they caught Sneak and me in the woods."

"He has left off fighting, now," said William, smiling, who had interpreted Joe's words to Red Eagle, and had received the information he imparted to Joe, in return. "He is a prophet, or priest, and is as harmless as a dove, but as wise as a serpent."

"And if Mr. Glenn hadn't stopped me," said Joe, shaking his head, "I'd soon served him as the black snake served the rattlesnake."

The pipe of peace was then smoked, even in the prairie, and the company from the valley took leave of the children of the forest. But before this was done, Red Eagle bestowed several beautiful presents on La-u-na and Mary, consisting of precious stones, a boon he alone might confer; to the children some stuffed birds of exquisite plumage; and he threw around Biddy's neck the stuffed skin of a rattlesnake.

"Och! St. Peter! Murther! Take the nasty varmint away," cried she. "Oh, Misther Glenn, Misther William, saize it, kill it."

"It's not a snake," said Joe—"its only a stuffed skin of one—and a fine present it is. Keep it Biddy—it'll be a nice thing to show, when we get to house-keeping together. See, here's all the rattles, as perfect as life—and they'll please the children."

"Kape it yerself," said Biddy, striving to get it from around her neck, but fearing to touch it with her hands, to the infinite diversion of the Indians.

The party returned without delay to the valley. They had intended to enter the cave during their rambles, but this was postponed for a future occasion.

"Biddy," said Joe, when they were about to pass the mouth of the cave, the children being with their parents, some distance in advance, "wouldn't you like to go in here and see the White Spirit the Indians talk so much about?"

"Murther! No. I'm frightened most into fits now, at the thoughts of the things. Oh, the bloody snakes. And I've got the skin of one on me, now."

"It's worth a hundred dollars, Biddy. I heard Mr. Glenn say so. See what a lovely tail its got, and all the rattles on it."

"The jangle makes me blood run cowl'd," said Biddy.

"They may save your life, Biddy; I heard Mr. William say so. If an enemy comes at you in the night, all you'll have to do is to hide out of sight, and rattle the tail. Then he'll be sure to run away."

"Is that thrue, Mr. Back?"

"As true as gospel, Biddy. And now here's the other Pete, the saucy image of my Pete, standing in the door of the cave, as if he was the owner of the house."

"And sure he's friendly," said Biddy, "for he wags his tail at us."

"It's at me; he wants me to pardon him for biting my leg. See, here's the print of his teeth," and Joe rolled up his breeches and exhibited the marks.

"The vile little crather," said Biddy.

"But I'll have my revenge, some day," said Joe, glancing forward, to see if he might not throw a stone at the dog, without being seen by Glenn. Finding none of a convenient size, he abandoned his purpose. But the dog seemed to understand the thing he was meditating, and just after he passed by the cave, the little, sly tormentor sprang nimbly out and nipped him again, on the same leg, but not so severely as at the first time.

"Confound your skin," cried Joe, whirling round and pointing his musket at the dog.

"Don't shoot, Mr. Back, or I'll faint," cried Biddy. But the dog was out of sight in a moment.

"Where is he?" asked Joe. "He's vanished—and maybe he's a spirit. If so, its no use shooting, without a silver bullet. But I pulled the trigger before I thought of the law—and I'm glad it wasn't cocked."

They strode forward more briskly after this accident, and overtook the rest before they reached the great gate of the enclosure.

CHAPTER VII.

PETE, THE DOG—JOE AND SNEAK ON GUARD—THE ARROW—JOE
KILLS AN INDIAN.

"There's that rascally Pete come to play with my Pete again," said Joe, gazing through a loop-hole out on the moon-lit lawn. "The rascal bit me again, Sneak, as I came past the cave—and yet Mr. Glenn wo'nt let me kill him."

"If he bit you in the day time, Joe," said Sneak, who stood at Joe's side, "maybe it wer'nt a dream."

"A dream! I never dream, Sneak, and you know it."

"How do I know it? I know you snore like the dickens."

"I don't believe that, Sneak; if I was to snore like the dickens it'd wake me up."

"It wakes me up, and I'm getting tired of it. But whar was you when the bantim dog, as Mr. Glenn call him, bit you?"

"Phantom—bantain's a chicken. I was passing by the cave. It was when I was coming home."

"Yes, and I seed you—and I seen more'n you think. You was galivantin Miss Biddy Rafferty. You need'nt deny it, for I watched out in the prairie, too."

"You did? But you could'nt. How the mischief could you see me there?"

"I seed you with the telescope, from the tower. Don't lie out of it."

"And so you've been watching me. Well, I did'nt tell you my project, any how."

"Ho! That's it, hey! But dod rot it, Joe, I've been havin' some thoughts of her myself. You ought to've told me at the start, and then we would'nt've interfered with each other."

"Sneak," said Joe, "we've got to fight, we've got to fight a duel till one's dead—I see it."

"No you don't see it. Dod—I would'nt fight a duel for any Irish gal in creation."

"You give her up, then, do you?"

"I hav'nt said it. Do you like her, Joe?"

"Like her? Of course. Who else is here I can like?"

"Nobody but the darkies, and they're wus than squaws. And I'm not sartin I like the Irish gal better than the squaws. If they was all like La-u-na, I'd be dead in love in a minit, the fust time I seed 'em."

"Why don't you like Biddy, Sneak?"

"Why, she calls me Mr. Snake."

"She does? I know she hates Snakes. But, Sneak, she don't mean the snakes that bite, it's only her Irish way of pronunciation. She calls me Mr. Back, and I don't mind it."

"I know all about that—but dod rot it, who would like to have a wife who was always calling him Mr. Snake? I could'nt stand it, no how."

Sneak then turned abruptly and strode briskly towards the opposite loop holes.

"You'll give her up to me, then?" said Joe, as they met again.

"I hav'nt got her to give her. Dod rot the gal! Let her rip! Now about the Indgens. I want to fight—I'm greedy as a snarvileous catamount for it—I'm aching for a brush—and I shall die of a broken heart if nothing turns up to stir my blood."

"Hang it, Sneak," said Joe, "I should think being in love would stir up the blood of any body."

"Love! But the Indgens. Charley says you got frightened."

"Charley, a little boy! But, Sneak, Biddy is a right pretty girl. She's nineteen, which aint too young."

"He said you looked like deer's taller, which aint yaller, like beef's."

"And she's the right size—as tall as La-u-na, and white as Mrs. Mary."

"And you fell flat on your face, and was so frightened you could'nt speak."

"That's a lie, Sneak. I would'nt speak, because I didn't want the Indians to hear my voice. Then she's straight in the back, and has a round, beautiful neck."

"And Mr. Glenn says you got lame."

"That was a lie I told him, Sneak, because I didn't want to leave Biddy. She has splendid arms, bulging and firm as Dick's legs above the knee. It's true she's got red hair—"

"I despise red hair," said Sneak, turning away and rushing towards the other side of the enclosure.

"You've got red hair yourself," cried Joe, after him.

When they met again, not a word was spoken by either, and they pursued their several ways with becoming industry, until Joe paused again and looked out at the little dogs, who never ceased to gambol in the moon-light.

"Joe," said Sneak, laying his hand heavily on his shoulder, "little Jule said you wanted to fight an old Indgen a fist fight. The very thoughts of sich a thing would feel disgraceful to me."

"Sneak," said Joe, turning round suddenly, "who do you think it was?"

"How could I tell this fur? I saw you moving your arms, but I couldn't see he was a old man."

"Sneak, has all the hair come back the Indians pulled off of your head when they catched us bee-hunting in Missouri, a long time ago?"

"No, and never will, for the biggest of the rascals stripped off some skin with it. Look here."

He took off his cap and bowed his head so that Joe could see a bald spot on the top of it.

"Well, Sneak, screw your anger up to the sticking point; the old Indian I wanted to whip is the very one who pulled our hair."

"Dod rot him! Are you sartin?"

"Yes, for he confessed it."

"Has *he* got any hair?"

"A scalp-lock."

"I must have his sculp."

"Aint he too old?"

"Maybe he is—but maybe he's got a son. I'll make him tell."

"Sneak," said Joe, in a sort of whisper, "that old rascal might have snatched this very night. They're going into the cave with nine knot torches, to leave dried meat and hard bread for the little brown dog, who must be the White Spirit they worship."

"That's not so, Joe; the brown dog aint a white spirit. He's only a brown dog. I let him lick my hand once, and his tongue's warm. He's no more a white spirit nor I."

"Perhaps there's a white one in the cave, Sneak; any how, they're going there to-night—and the old hair-pulling rascal among the rest. He's a priest or prophet, now, since he's done all the mischief he could. I was going to say, I would walk your rounds as well as mine, while you sneaked out and snatched the old fellow."

"Sneak's my name, but it's not my natur, Joe," said Sneak. "I don't like to break rules—but I'd like, above all things, to have the old feller's sculp-lock. I'd like to have a fair fight with a Indgen of my own age and size—but a tussel with a old one wouldn't do me any honor. You was going to fight him in the prairie—and now why don't you go sneaking after him, yourself? I didn't cry and complain, and beg, when he tore my hair out, like you."

"Me! I go sneaking after the Indians in the dark! I'd scorn it. But, Sneak, the dog nipped me again, and would be sure to bark at me. Now, he licked your hand, and he wouldn't give the alarm if you was to go."

"I won't go—that's enough. It's agin my principles—and I won't dirty my hands with a old Indgen, when I know we'll soon have young ones to fight."

"Do you know that, Sneak?" asked Joe, very earnestly.

"Yes, I know it. I got up in the tower when Mr. Glenn and Mr. William, who used to be called the Young Eagle when he was a chief among the Osages, galloped out in the prairie with the presents, and way over to the southerd I saw a spy of the Apa-

ches watching 'em. He was dodging about in the scrubby oaks, and shaking his fist."

"What for?" asked Joe.

"What for! Do you think the Apaches are goin' to allow us to gin presents to the Camanches, and not to them?"

"Can't we give some to them, too?"

"But they'll be mad because we gin 'em to the others fust. I know Indgen keraeter by heart. We're going to have fine times, and plenty of fighting, Joe."

"I'm glad of one thing," said Joe, after a long pause; "they hav'nt got many guns."

"That no advantage of our'n," said Sneak; "they'll shoot us without making any noise, and we'll never know who done it."

"Blast the Indians!" said Joe. "I wish they'd attend to their own business, and let us alone."

"Why, you dunce, it's their business not to let us alone; and it's our consarn to see they don't git the upper hand of us."

Joe turned and resumed his march, and walked with so much briskness, that he reached the opposite loop-holes several paces in advance of Sneak.

"What's thar, Joe?" asked Sneak, coming up behind him.

Joe's response was a violent spring backwards, and the force was so great, and Sneak was taken so unexpectedly, that he was prostrated on his back, Joe falling with him, while the guns of both rattled on the ground.

"Dod rot it!" said Sneak, with difficulty, the breath almost knocked out of him.

"Hush! hist!" said Joe, turning over and whispering in his ear.

"What's thar?" repeated Sneak.

"Indians!"

"Indgens! It's the friendly Camaches, I guess."

"No," said Joe, continuing to whisper.

"No? Dod rot it, then, what are we laying here for? Git off of me"

They grasped up their guns silently. Joe ran the muzzle of his musket through the loop-hole, but hesitated to bring his face up to the stock.

"You've knocked my flint out," said Sneak. "Here it is," he continued, the next moment, finding it easily in the moonlight, and proceeding to adjust it. "Do you spy any of 'em now?" he asked, as he screwed in the flint.

"No," said Joe, "not now," for he had not looked out since his tumble.

"Joe," continued Sneak, "if it's a false alarm, I'll knock you down for knockin' me down. Why don't you look out? What're you standin' thar for in that way, with your face to one side? It's no time now to be playing your cowardly pranks. If you're a coward in earnest, you needn't be pretending in fun. When it comes to knockin a man down in fun, it's no sport. I don't believe you need any Indgen."

"Hush, Sneak, don't speak so loud—I'll swear to it."

"Let me look," said Sneak, peering through the hole over the barrel of Joe's gun. "Yonder is a Indgen—but maybe the snar-vilerous savage is a Camanche."

"How far is he off?" asked Joe.

"Near a quarter mile."

"He was almost up to the picket when I saw him."

"That's nothing; he mought've been agin the slabs there, and he's had time enough to be a half mile off now. He's standing still, and I can't see if he's a Camanche or a Apache."

"Shoot at him, Sneak," said Joe.

"You be dot rot! You want me to lose my gun for breaking the law."

"No I don't, Sneak, upon my honor. We can shoot our enemies."

"But if it's a Camanche, he's no enemy."

"I'll swear he's no friend, if it's the one I saw. I'll swear he raised his bow and shot at my eye."

"He did? But maybe he had no arrow, and was jest frightenen you."

"Now, Sneak, how could he tell me from you?"

"That's a fact; and he'd no business to be creepin' up to the palisade and making sech unfriendly motions. Maybe he was waitin' to ketch us off our guard."

"He was," said Joe, "and who can tell if he has'nt been shootin' at our backs?"

"We kin tell he has'nt hit 'em," said Sneak. "I won't shoot, Joe, till I'm better convinced. If you had ~~it~~ sworn to it, I might have thought you was'nt deceived. But, dod rot me, if I had seen him shoot a arrow at my eye—mind me—if I had seen it with my own eyes—I'd gin him a blizzard, if I died for it the next minit."

"Then, without swearing to it, Sneak, I'll take my—I mean, as I hope to be saved, he shot his bow at me."

"Then he's your enemy—and you can do jest as you please."

"Why, Sneak, I heard the arrow hit right close to the hole."

"You did? Then clar the way, and let me see."

Sneak, without removing Joe's gun from the orifice through which it protruded, leaned forward and saw distinctly an arrow imbedded in the wood, not more than two inches from the loop-hole; and silently he drew Joe's attention to it.

"Git out of the way, now," said he, in a low and determined voice; "that's enough—the arrow'll clar us—take your shot gun away."

"Stop, Sneak," said he, "let me see if I'm wounded."

"You're a fool! Wounded, and not know it."

"I see it," said Joe; "it's a flint head, and it's stuck deep in the wood. Oh, goodness! if it had hit me in the eye."

"Git out o' my way," said Sneak, endeavoring to thrust Joe from the loop-hole. Joe was not unwilling to get out of the way; but in the hasty handling of his musket, it was discharged, and flew back some fifteen feet, without striking either of the sentinels.

The explosion was tremendous, and the reverberations echoed and re-echoed throughout the startled valley. The wolves in the

distance ceased to howl—the katy-did and the whippoorwill were hushed—and Pete himself, abandoning his playfellow without, came running up to Joe in amazement.

“He’s gone, anyhow,” said Sneak, looking out.

“Maybe I’ve killed him,” said Joe.

“You be dot rot!” said Sneak, contemptuously.

“I suppose you’re mad because I wouldn’t let you shoot first,” said Joe, taking up his gun and blowing a long column of smoke through the touch hole. “And you’ll be saying it was accident, if I killed him.”

“Now, see here, Joe,” said Sneak, turning to his companion, “are you going to lie about it, and say you done that on purpose?”

“Done what?”

“Killed that snarvilerous savage.”

“Is he dead?”

“He’s laying down jest where he stood—and it’s likely he’s dead.”

“Tiderei—tidereo—tiderum!” sang Joe, dancing about on the short grass, and kissing his musket when he stopped to re-charge it. “And it didn’t kick me a bit, Sneak. You may call it accident, if you like—but it’ll be hard to make ’em believe all my great feats are accidents.”

“And was it not an accident?” asked Glenn, who came up, followed closely by William.

“No, sirree,” said Joe.

“Then give me your gun, sir. I see that further lenity will not answer.”

“You may take my gun, Mr. Glenn,” said Joe, “but I hav’nt done anything wrong.”

“Explain, Sneak,” said Glenn.

“Give him his tarnation gun,” said Sneak.

“Take it, Joe,” said Glenn, understanding Sneak’s meaning.

“It’s all right,” said Joe, in reply to William’s interrogating looks. “See here,” he continued, pointing through the loop-hole at the arrow sticking in the palisade.

William thrust his arm through and extracted the arrow.

"It is an Apache arrow," said he, "and the feather is from a crow's wing."

"True," said Glenn; "this is a declaration of war."

"Aint it war itself?" asked Joe. "He came near hitting me in the eye—and then I peppered him."

"Did you hit him?"

"I rather guess I did. That looks mightily like a dead Indian laying out yonder."

"Is it so, Sneak?"

"Look and see," replied Sneak, pointing in the direction where the object lay. "It's too far for any mortal to hit any body 'cept by chance—but sometimes a man's easy to kill, if a stray shot strikes him in a tender place."

"We'll know now," said William, "for I see Red Eagle coming with a white flag on his bow."

The chief, attracted by the astounding report, had sought to learn the occasion of it—and when William saw him, he was approaching the prostrate object supposed to be the Indian. He stooped down over it, and remained long in that position.

Glenn and William left the enclosure and joined the chief without delay.

"Is he an Apache?" asked William, when near enough to ascertain it was truly an Indian.

"Yes," said Red Eagle, in his own dialect. "He has been following me for many days, and the presents you gave us, which he must have seen, maddened him. There will be war. The White Spirit fears it, and he cannot control our young men when the hunting season is over. But it may not be for several moons—at least in this valley. Do not venture far away from the valley. I will always be near. If you want me send to the mountain. The forest is neutral, and it is the boundary line between my people and the Apaches. Take this man into your enclosure and bury him quietly, and it may be some weeks before his people will know who killed him. Farewell! I go to the mountain. But Red Eagle is

Having uttered these words, the great chief departed towards the cave.

Soon after Sneak and Joe were beckoned to, and came out and aided in conveying the dead Indian within the palisades.

"Let me see where I hit him," said Joe.

"At what point did you aim?" asked William.

"Answer that," said Sneak.

"At the bulk," said Joe. "My gun scatters at that distance—but it shoots mighty strong. Here's the hole, right by his eye."

It was true—and the shot had penetrated the brain. It was the only wound found on him.

"Ketch hold," said Sneak, seeing Joe's reluctance.

"Mr. Glenn," said Joe, "it makes me sick to touch dead people."

"Then you ought'nt to kill 'em," said Sneak. "But this is a light one," he continued, "like unto his buck, and I'm not afeard to handle him. Git out of my way."

"Saying this, he threw the body over his shoulder, and set off in a brisk walk towards the palisade.

"What're you doing, Sneak?" cried Joe, following, and seeing Sneak feeling the contents of the savage's pouch. "Remember, we are to share even."

"Who lost a knife?" asked Sneak, when he deposited his burden behind the stable where it was to be buried.

"I," said Joe; "I lost mine a week ago. That's it—where did you find it, Sneak?"

"In the Indgen's pouch."

"Then h's been in here, for I lost it here."

"Sartin! The snarvilerous dog's been every whar."

"Good gracious! And he might have shot me from the inside," said Joe.

"Get the spades, Joe," said Sneak. "I reckon you can dig. Make haste—Mr. Glenn and Mr. William will watch till we're done."

"What's that?" asked Joe, returning with the spades, and seeing Sneak taking something else out of the Indian's pouch.

"I don't know, Joe. It looks like a rock on one side, and it's like glass on the other. It's mighty bright. I'll show it to Mr. Glenn."

It proved to be a diamond of great value. The tomahawk, knife, bow and arrows, &c., were divided as equally as possible between the two—the body was buried, and the sod replaced over it—and then, with injunctions to Sneak and Joe, to say as little as possible about the occurrence, Glenn and William returned to their couches.

CHAPTER VIII.

CÆSAR AND POMPEY ON GUARD—A SKUNK SKIN AND AN ARROW—A DROVE OF BUFFALO AND FIRE-WORKS—JOE'S GUN KICKS AGAIN.

At midnight, when Joe and Sneak were to be relieved by Cæsar and Pompey, Glenn and William rose again. Sneak, in reply to their interrogatories could give no information in regard to the dead Indian's companion, for William said there must be a surviving spy in the vicinity. They watched an hour with the negro sentinels, but could not perceive any indications of the presence of another Apache. Then, after exhorting Cæsar and Pompey to observe a strict vigilance during the remainder of the night, they returned once more to their couches.

The ebony guardians strode to and fro with a full appreciation of the importance of the trust reposed in their keeping. But, unfortunately, when a Virginia negro, late at night, is silent, he is likely to fall asleep. Hence it was indispensable to guard against such a perilous contingency; and none could have been more completely convinced of this necessity, than the dusky sentinels themselves.

"Cæsar," said Pompey, when they met, the fifth or sixth time.

"Pompey," responded Cæsar.

"You's still got eyes open?"

"Wide awake."

"See nuffin?"

"Nairy thing."

"Den dere's nuffin to see? Cæsar."

"Pompey."

"Dese 'simmons' long time gittin ripe."

"Dey was ripe last month, in old Virginny."

"No 'possoms come till dey git ripe."

"'Spose not," said Cæsar.

"But den, Cæsar, we gits deer meat, bar meat, and buffalo meat,

out here. No patroles arter us—we's patroles ourselves. Heah, heah."

"Heah, heah," laughed Cæsar, also, equally delighted with the change of residence. On the preceding afternoon, which was their holiday, they had filled a wagon with the game they killed themselves, in conjunction with Hannibal, a mulatto, who was a good hunter, and who always contrived to put the hardest of the labor on his companions.

"Den, Cæsar, dere's no good for nuffin free niggers out here, and no poor white people."

"Dat's so," said Cæsar. "Its Happy Walley; we's in."

"And de Indgens here, nebber see a nigger before. Dey won't sculp us, Cæsar."

"Sure ob dat, Pompey?"

"Sartin. We's got no har. Dey don't know what wool's good for. Heah, heah."

"Den, Pomp, it's de white man dey fights. Dey don't know nuffin 'bout black man. Hannibal's der own color, and dey won't kill him."

"Heah, heah."

They laughed quite heartily at this idea, and resumed their rounds. But when silence began to beget drowsiness, they again resorted to the only remedy.

"Cæsar," said Pompey.

"Pompey," said Cæsar.

"Didn't you hear dat gun to-night?"

"No."

"I did."

"You was dreamin."

"I was sleeping—but I heard it. It woke me up."

"Is dat so?"

"Cæsar."

"Pompey."

"Cæsar," continued Pompey, "Dinah heard it too. Dey's been shooting somefin; and 'twas Massa Joe's musket, for it shook like a earthquake, Cæsar. Dey kilt somefin. I knowed it when I seed

"Golly, Pomp, dat's news," said Cæsar, his eyes twinkling like stars. "Muss been somebody, or a dead dog dey buried. See any marks on de ground?"

"Tink me did; can't fool dis nigger. Cæsar, you go my side, too, and I'll go see."

Cæsar started forward in a much brisker walk than usual; and, instead of confining his perambulations to his own side of the enclosure, he made the entire circle of the palisades.

Pompey, infallible in the unravelling of nocturnal mysteries, soon discovered where the sod had been cut and replaced over the object buried behind the stable. When throwing up the earth he was in his element; and it didn't require many minutes for him to penetrate the loose soil, and reach down to the Indian.

"Who's dar," cried he, seeing a moccasin. "Who's dar I say! Heah, heah. He's too dead to answer me. Dat's de gun I heard in my sleep. Who is it? Mus be Indgen—we seed all de rest 'cept Massa Roughgrove, and he's nebber out in de night. Stop—I'll see." He cut the moccasin, and was able, by the light of the declining moon to perceive the color of the foot. "Dat'll do," said he. He then threw back the earth, and replaced the sod with care and precision, but left the spades exactly where they had been forgotten by Sneak and Joe. Then hastening back, he resumed his round, unmindful of the enquiring looks of Cæsar.

"Pompey," said Cæsar, being the first to break the silence, after meeting and parting several times.

"Cæsar," responded Pompey.

"What's got in dat nigger?"

"De debbil."

"What's you seen?"

"Indgen."

"De debbil! Whar?"

"Behind de stable."

"Golly. Why didn't you shoot?"

"Dead. Dey kilt him, when I heard de gun go off in my sleep. Look sharp, Cæsar, dar's Indgens about."

"But he's dead. Dead Indgen don't frighten dis nigger."

"Cæsar, when one's dead, dar muss be some alive—dat proves it. Cæsar you's brave, and dey say Pompey's brave as Cæsar. We muss keep our eyes skinned, and we muss fight like de debbil, and keep up our kraeters."

"What's dat?" said Cæsar.

"What's what, Cæsar?"

"Dat ting on de fence. De moon's gwyng down, and I kin see his shape."

"Dat's a possum setting up dar," said Pompey. "Posimmons gwyng to git ripe, Cæsar, and den we'll ketch de possums like in old Varginny."

"Dat's no possum, Pompey; he's too long."

"Taint? Is he pole cat? Go close, Cæsar, you can see like a cat in de dark."

"Taint dark nuff yet, Pompey. Wait till we cum back."

They separated, and strode to the opposite side, where they paused and discussed the matter further. One still thought it was an opossum, peeping over at the persimmon trees, and supposed it would be bad policy to disturb him. He was in favor of letting him learn how to get within the enclosure, so that he might show others the way to the persimmon grove. The other still adhered to his first opinion, that it was a pole cat; and he thought he ought to be "chunked" down, and never be permitted to find the way to the inside of the pallisade.

"Cæsar," said Pompey, "its dark now, and you kin see. Go close up under him, and take a good look."

"Pompey," said Cæsar, "ef it's a pole cat, I don't want to go close up under him."

"You know der natur—ef dey's gwyng to do anything 'fensive dey's sure to show it."

"Dat's true," said Cæsar, "and dis one is still."

They met again at the appointed place, and the object of their attention had not moved an inch.

"Cæsar," said Pompey, "I say possum."

Cæsar then approached it nearer than he had hitherto done, and placing his hand over his eyes, looked long and steadily.

"What you see, Cæsar," asked Pompey.

"Pomp! Pomp!" said Cæsar, in great excitement, "he's got eyes in his belly."

"Dat's a lie," said Pompey.

"By golly, I see two big eyes in his belly."

"Is dat true, Cæsar?" asked Pompey, now partaking of Cæsar's alarm. "What sort animal's dat? I nebber hearn of him. It must be de debbil. Let's run."

"Run!" said Cæsar. "Don't you mind Massa Charles said we muss nebber run from de debbil?"

"I mind's it—but den he said we musn't shoot de debbil. If he'd only let us have a fair fight wid him, we'd fight de debbil he-self. Come. We'll walk den, if you won't run."

Cæsar turned round to walk away; but he had not taken two steps before his cap fell off.

"What's dat?" asked Pompey, pausing.

Cæsar stood perfectly still, with his hands rubbing the right side of his head.

"What's dat, I say?" continued Pompey. "Is anyting dar. Dere's no bees in de dark."

"Pick up my cap, Pompey."

"Here," said Pompey—"and dere's a hole in it."

"Is der? Dat's it. Look here;" and Cæsar exhibited his hand, which even by starlight, could be seen to be covered with blood. "Look, Pomp, de pole cat's gone!"

"Dat's true, and here's a arrow sticking in de ground. Cæsar, he mought 've kilt you. Call massa."

"No—I'll shoot. Clar de way." He ran his gun through the nearest loop hole, but no Indian could be seen. "Dar's nuffin dar to shoot," he continued, a moment after. "Pompey, run and tell Mas a Glenn. I'll watch."

Pompey did so; and soon after both Glenn and William repaired to the place where the supposed animal had been seen.

"Here's de arrow," said Pompey.

"And it has the war feather," said William. "But how could he look over the palisade, fifteen feet high?"

"This explains it," said Glenn, opening one of the concealed narrow gates. "Here is a rude ladder made of poles and grape vines. He did not even attempt to take it away. I fear war is declared."

"It is to be feared," said William; "and the Apaches can count many thousand warriors."

"True," said Glenn, "but our friends, the Camanches, can muster quite as many. Besides our small cannon up in the tower will sweep the delta, and my fire-works will frighten the savages."

"Very true," said William; "but they may likewise frighten our friends. Our best plan will be to send for Red Eagle, and explain to him the nature of the rockets, and other pyrotechnic devices."

"Who will go?" asked Glenn.

"I will," said William.

"No, oh no," cried La-u-na, who, with Mary, being alarmed at the unusual disturbances of the night, had followed their husbands.

"No," said Mary. "You must not go, brother William."

"Some one must go," said William, "and I am the best qualified."

"No, no," said La-u-na. "I will go. I can find my uncle. None of the enemy will hurt me."

"We cannot consent to that," said Glenn; "but there may be no necessity. Perhaps they can be overtaken to-morrow."

"Not easily," said William. "They started this night after their visit to the cave. Perhaps La-u-na or I may find one of the spies left in the neighborhood, and he will send a runner after them. And there may be no necessity for haste. The Apaches don't come for a month yet; and they may be now hundreds of miles distant hunting the buffalo. Let us return to the house."

They left Cæsar and Pompey to continue their watch till daylight.

"Cæsar," said Pompey, when they met the second time at the

"Pompey," was the reply.

"Let me see your head. Golly, de blood's runnin down your nose. Is you kilt?"

"No, Pompey, I tink not. De arrow scraped my head, but didn't go in. It's took a streak of de wool away and cut thro de hide."

"Dat's nuffin, den. It'll get well itself. But he's sculpted you Cæsar—heah, heah."

"If dat's all, I don't mind sculpting," said Cæsar. "But den ef de arrow had gone in, Pomp."

"No danger ob dat; heah, heah. You's got too hard a bone for dat. It turned de arrow. Heah, heah."

"'Spose, den, Pompey, de nex Indgen shoots you in de back—what den?"

"Oh hush. Don't talk bout sich tings. What's dat?"

"What's what? dat light way over yonder?"

"Golly, its not de sun."

It was not. It was the light of a burning prairie in the distance, far to the east.

"I know what's it," said Cæsar. "It's de buffalo. I heard Massa Charles say twas time to see de prairie on fire in dat quarter, and he tole me to keep a look out for it. Dat's de cause why no more Indgens is here. Dey's arter der winter's wittals."

"De light gits lighter," said Pompey.

"Dat's true," said Cæsar. "Massa says when der's no breeze down here in de valley, its blowing like blazes in de prairie. It's comin, Pompey. We's got to look out and 'tinguish our names."

Again they separated, traversing their allotted rounds; and for a long time no word was spoken.

"What's dat?" at length asked Pompey.

"Dat's jest what I was gwyng to ask," said Cæsar.

"It roars like a mill dam."

"Wusser 'an dat. It's like de woods on fire. But taint dat. It's louder an' louder. I's gitting skeered, Pompey."

"Me too, Cæsar. Let's run and tell Massa Charles."

"No sar. He said we musn't leave our posts if de debbil hisself cum. Let's shoot our guns."

"No," said Pompey. "Der's nuffin I see 'to shoot at."

"Dey is. I see 'em," said Cæsar.

"See what?"

"It's like a black cloud. It makes de earth trimble. Here's Massa Charles, and Massa William, and Massa Joe, and Massa Sneak, and all de rest. De arth's cum to a cend, Pompey. Let's say our prayers."

"You be dod rot," said Sneak. "Git out of the way. Let me see."

"Buffalo!" said Glenn, who had been gazing intently through a loop hole.

They came in thousands from the grove at the head of the valley.

"We must not let them stay here," said William. "They would destroy the grass in an hour. The Indians are on the hunt. I see their fires a great many miles off."

"My children," said old Mr. Roughgrove, "we cannot stop them, and there is danger of their penetrating the palisade. They fill the entire width of the valley, and they cannot be turned back. They must escape up the few steep passes at the lower end of the valley, or be dashed down the precipice beyond the cañon.

"Then we need not expend our ammunition on them," said Glenn.

"No," said William; "if we can stampede them they will kill themselves. They will leave enough of their dead to supply us with meat for a whole year. La-u-na, Mary, children—all of you," for the entire population came running out into the enclosure in great alarm—"you need not be frightened, for there is not a particle of danger."

"No, there is no danger," said Glenn. "Remain here, however; Juliet and Charles shall see the pretty fireworks I promised them."

Then giving some directions as to what should be done in the event of the inundation of animals breaking down the palisade, Glenn ascended, with as little delay as possible, to the summit of the tower.

On swept the irresistible black torrent; and yet, when the fore-

most of them reached the field which had been enclosed for purposes of cultivation, they snorted and parted to the right and the left.

"They are frightened not at what they see," said William, who with difficulty could perceive what had taken place, "but at the scent of Pompey, Cæsar and Hannibal."

"Cæsar. Hear dat?" said Pompey, who stood in the rear.

"I did, Pomp," said Cæsar. "De Indgins smell white man, buf-falo de nigger, and nigger de pole cat. Heah, heah."

"Mr. William," said Joe, "mayn't I shoot the king bull if I see him? I want his skin to hang up with the grizzly bear's as trophies"

"I care not, if Glenn and my father make no objection. The report will not be heard far in this roaring hurricane."

Joe ran up the tower, and obtained a half uttered assent from Glenn, who was intent upon his own business. Then he applied to old Mr. Roughgrove, saying that both William and Glenn had given him permission. It was silently acquiesced in.

The frightful mass had now reached the palisade, and again parted to the right and left, and were rushing like a mountain torrent past a rocky island.

Suddenly the air and the earth were illuminated. Glenn had ignited one of his revolving wheels. Again the animals swayed to the right and the left, pressing desperately against each other. Their horns rattled like ten thousand pikes in collision; and they lowed and bellowed as they leaped furiously on. As the display above became brighter and grander, every motion of the huge wild animals could be distinctly seen through the loop holes. Their glistening eyes, as they plunged forward with their heads bent down, were easily distinguishable; for even the green turf upon which the beating of their hoofs resembled the sound of innumerable muffled drums, was illuminated by the glow above.

"Biddy," said Joe, "watch me. I'm going to kill the king bull I was telling you about the other day."

"And sure I'd like to see it," said Biddy, approaching the loop hole through which Joe had thrust his musket. "Och, all of 'em

are bulls," said she. "Look at the monsters! Great humps on their backs, wid nasty horns like beetles. Why don't you shoot, Mr. Back?"

"Stand a little to one side, Biddy, till I get aim," said Joe. She looked over his shoulder, and Joe blazed away. As usual, the musket kicked tremendously, knocking Joe several paces back, and prostrating Biddy on the ground.

"Murther!" cried she; "I'm kilt. Oh, Misther Back, you said it was the bull you was going to shoot, but you've kilt me."

"No, Biddy," said Joe, helping her to rise. "It was the gun kicking back."

"And sure, wasn't it the bull? I hope the nasty crather's dead. Och, I shall niver saa anither shot."

"Are you hurt, Biddy?"

"Murthered, amost. It struck me on the breast, and took the breath away from me."

"Dod rot it," cried Sneak, "what're you shooting for? Its agin the law to shoot without orders, at such tarnation beasts as them."

"Be quiet, Sneak, till I lead Biddy baek to the children," said Joe, standing his gun against the palisade. Then I'll come and answer you. But you may know before hand that you are not the commander of this fort. I've got orders to kill the king bull from your betters—and I'll do it at the risk of my life. Come, Biddy," he continued, placing her arm in his.

"King bull," said Sneak, "there's a hundred of 'em here." Then he snatched the musket when Joe's back was turned, and charged it with powder.

"Your nose is bleeding, Biddy," said Joe. "Let me wipe it. You'll soon be over it. The first time I got kicked I thought I was dead—but now, since I've been kicked so often, I don't mind it a bit."

"Murther, here's the blood!" said Biddy, who had not perceived it before.

"It's all off, now," said Joe, wiping it away, "and you're well again. Biddy," he continued, detaining her, "you can't think how

pretty your face is, in the reflection of Mr. Glenn's fire-works up there. Stay, Biddy, till I put a question to you."

"Question?"

"Yēs—a plain question. Won't you be my wife?"

"Och, nonsense. Let me go, Mr. Back."

"Think of it, Biddy, and don't call me Mr. Back, any more; but plain Joe."

"I don't call you Mr. Back."

"Yes you do—but you don't mean it."

"I don't do any sich thing, Mr. Back. I said Mr. Back."

"I know it."

"Yis you did know it. And I'm offended at ye."

"No—don't be offended, Biddy. Say, won't you have me?"

"No, I wont! For you'd be saying I could not spake plain."

"No, no. You *must* have me, Biddy, because there's nobody else for you to have—unless you take Sneak, the long lean pole of a man."

"Mr. Snake. And he'd be saying I didn't spake his name right, ither."

"He says so, nōw—he says you call him a snake."

"Oh, the baste."

"So you must have me, Biddy—and I'll make the best husband in the world. Won't you?"

"There's a plenty of ithers, Mr. Back."

"Who? Pompey and Cæsar and Hannibal are married."

"The nagers! Don't speak to me again, Mr. Back."

"I didn't say you could ever look at 'em."

"But there's noble Indgens, Mr. Back—and I may get a chafe. And then I'll be a chafeton's leddy."

"I know you're afraid of 'em Biddy, and you're only tantalizing me. It'll be all right. Listen, they're calling you. Charley and Juliet are clapping their hands and calling you to go to them to see the fireworks. Good bye. I must see after my dead king bull."

As the exhibition of Glenn increased in intensity of brilliancy, the apparently interminable herd of buffalo became more and more desperate. Those next to the enclosure pressed frantically against

the rest, and the outside ones could be distinctly heard falling into the water that flowed round the island.

Glenn increased the magnitude of his fire, so that there should be no diminution of the terror; and when his revolving wheels were nearly expended, he fired off Roman candles, which fell with blinding brightness in the midst of the writhing mass of monsters, who dashed desperately on, trampling under foot all that fell before them.

"I've popped the question, Sneak," said Joe, running back to where Sneak stood looking out at the irresistible torrent, which still thundered past.

"What? to Biddy? And when all creation's turned upside down?"

"Hanged if I didn't."

," And what did the gal say?"

"That's none of your business. But she called you a baste."

"That's a tarnation sight better than a snake. But I'll baste her, if she don't mind."

"No you wont. But, Sneak, didn't I kill him?"

"Yes—I see twenty laying about. You killed 'em all."

"That's impossible—I don't think I killed so many."

"Most of 'em's calves."

"I didn't shoot at 'em. The bull's my game."

"There's a thousand going by to the minit," said Sneak.

"But not my king bull? Suppose you kill one, Sneak. There's my musket—wait till I load it."

"No. You'll not catch me shooting that infarnel gun."

"It kicks, Sneak, I must confess," said Joe, as he recharged the musket; "but don't you see I've padded the breech? When it knocked me over a while ago, it didn't hurt a bit. It was like being struck with boxing gloves."

"With what?"

"Oh, I can't explain 'em, now. You never saw a boxing match. Now for it. But won't you take the next fire?"

"No!"

"I thought it was polite to invite you. Yes. I see plenty of king bulls. Here goes."

Joe pulled the trigger, and was knocked at least twenty feet back, while the gun, in its saltatory gyrations came in collision with Sneak's head and prostrated him likewise."

"Confound it!" cried Joe, springing up—"that was a buster, almost. Biddy made me forget how much powder to pour in. But it didn't hurt much. The pad saved me. Sneak, what're *you* getting up for. How came you down?"

"Dod rot your dod rotted musket."

"Where is it? Where's my gun? There it is, right by you. Let me see it by the light of the fire works. It ain't busted. It's a safe gun, Sneak."

"Tarnation safe," said Sneak, rubbing his head.

"But what made *you* dodge, Sneak?"

"I dodge?"

"Yes. Didn't I see you getting up?"

"Joe," said Sneak, "I'll give you half my peltry, if you'll let me break the stock and bend the barrel of your gun."

"I wouldn't do it, Sneak, to save your long crane neck from breaking, or swinging either. What does it matter to you, if it does kick me? It's no concern of yours."

"No consarn of mine? Dod rot it, didn't it jest knock me down? Is not that a consarn of mine?"

"You must keep out of the way, if you ain't brave enough to stand it. How do I stand it?"

"You don't stand it. Wasn't you jest this minit picking yourself up off the ground?"

"But I didn't murmur at it. I'm used to it. "Good," he continued, looking out as he finished recharging his gun. "I floored him, Sneak. I'd swear it's the bull I saw."

"Yes, and maybe you'd swear to a lie. The critters are dying with fright. But I'm in earnest Joe. I want to break the musket. Mr. Glenn'll give you a rifle, and I'll larn you every day how to shoot it."

"I couldn't think of it, Sneak. I've got in the habit of shutting

my eyes when I pull the musket's trigger—and that won't do with a rifle.

"If it wasn't for one thing I'd break it anyhow," said Sneak.

"What one thing's that? fear I'd whip you?"


"Not exactly, Joe; though I should'nt wonder if you'd fight in a case of that kind. I'd take a whipping to get rid of the tarnation musket. But my conscience tells me I got my desarts just now for putting a load of powder in when you were away with the gal."

"Plague take your infernal hatchet face," said Joe, putting down his gun, and rolling up his sleeves, "I'll whip you any how, I believe."

"But don't be sartin, Joe," said Sneak, stepping back. "Don't you hear Mr. Glenn hollering at you not to shoot agin?"

"No—did he?"

"He did. And don't you see the buffaloes are all gone?"

"That's so," said Joe, king out.

And as the rear of the mighty host swept past, Glenn fired a quick succession of rockets after them, whose whizzing sounds as they sailed horizontally over their heads, increased the panic of the furious and maddened beasts. The hindmost leaped forward frantically against those in front, and many were precipitated over the rocky falls, or crushed in the narrow gorge at the lower extremity of the valley. The remainder dashed across the stream and rushed up the hill where the horsemen had passed with so much difficulty. And as the trampling sound receded in the distance, the furious barking of the little dog at the cave of the White Spirit was heard again.

"They're all gone," said Sneak.

"No, hanged if they are," said Joe. "I see 'em lying about on the ground. We'll have meat enough for a year, and tongues enough for the ladies—and robes enough for the winter. And I'm the only man who's killed any buffalo—and the only one that's killed an Indian. Sneak, never hint anything against my gun."

"Shet your mouth," said Sneak. "Day's breaking—and I'm

glad of it. They're all gone in. Let's us go, too, and get something to eat. I'm hungry. I saw you eating."

"I've been eating all night, Sneak; you know I can't watch when I'm hungry. Look at the poor dogs."

This remark was occasioned by seeing the hounds, the spaniel, and even Pete, slinking about the premises with their tails down in great despondency. They had not barked once, like the little dog at the White Spirit's cave, probably because, unlike the latter, they had never beheld such an awful irruption before. "Stop that," continued Joe, as Pete sat down on his haunches, and began to howl mournfully.

"Let the dog alone," said Sneak, "and tell me what the gal said when you popped the question."

"I won't. It's none of your business."

"I'm sartin to know it. I'll ask her."

"Don't Sneak. She'll be offended if she knows I've been telling our secrets to anybody."

"I will—if you don't tell me."

"Oh, then, she'll have me. That's enough."

"I don't believe it, Joe, 'cause I axed her to have me, and she didn't answer at all. Fair play's a jewel. Don't look glum. She must pick and choose for herself."

Joe couldn't object to that. And so they went in harmoniously to breakfast.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING OF THE CAMANCHES—JOE'S DILEMMA.

A more magnificent day never dawned than the one which succeeded the night of the irruption of the immense herd of buffalo. The valley was bathed in the golden glory of an unclouded autumnal sun, and the gentle breezes wafted from the forest the mellifluous songs of happy birds. But yet the scene was one of death and destruction, as contemplated from the tower, whither most of the inmates of the mansion repaired after breakfast.

"See—they are coming already," said William, drawing the attention of the rest to the flocks of crows, ravens, and buzzards, approaching from the forest. "They always follow these large droves of wild cattle," said he, "for they know that even if they escape the hunter's aim, they are constantly fighting among themselves, and trampling the weaker ones to death. Every day, and perhaps every hour, some of them are left inanimate on the plain, the prey of ravenous beasts and birds."

"And the wolves will come next," said Glenn, "if they be not here already, hid in the bushes. And, from the great number of the slain, no doubt they will fare sumptuously. I think hundreds have been left behind. I see them every where. The gorge at the lower end of the valley is blackened with them. Let us not neglect our share of the booty—and after a few days' hard work, we may repose with a full assurance that it must be a long time before starvation can stare us in the face."

This was assented to; but before they descended from the tower, little Charley, who had been amusing himself gazing through the telescope at distant objects, made an exclamation which attracted attention.

"Let me see," said William, taking the glass. "It is," said he, a moment after.

"Is what?" asked Glenn.

"The Camanches; and I see Red Eagle. They stand afar off, on a rise in the prairie, and gaze in this direction. I will mount my horse and go to them. Your fire works last night must have been seen by them. They cannot comprehend such a display, and they are filled with terror."

"There is a pretty large body of them," said Glenn.

"Yes," replied William, "several hundred. A hunting party must have been following the buffalo, and fell in with their head chief. If your fire had not dismayed them, we should have heard their whoops all round the valley, when the buffalo were here; for by frightening the beasts into such a place as this, they would have been enabled to secure as much meat as they wanted."

"You are correct, William," said Mr. Roughgrove, who had been silent. "The advantages of such a position as this would never have escaped the knowledge of the Camanches; and their first impulse would have been to create a panic among their victims. But they have been panic-stricken themselves. Go, William, and invite them to join us in securing the fruits of the victory. There will be enough for all."

"Yes, indeed," said La-u-na, "and they will do the work for us better than we could do it ourselves. They can preserve the meat so that it will be good for a whole year."

William, soon after, mounted his steed and sped to the high hills overlooking the valley. La-u-na, who had gone to the tower, watched his progress with the telescope; and she smiled with delight when she beheld her uncle bestow an affectionate greeting on her husband.

Red Eagle called around him some of the subordinate chiefs, and explained, as William had explained to him, the innocent nature of the strange exhibition of fire which they had witnessed from a distance, and which had alarmed them greatly. He then directed them to have the buffalo meat prepared and dried in the usual manner. He informed William that this party consisted of nearly two hundred of the flower of his young men, who had been in pursuit of the buffalo for some days. ~~They had already~~

many—and hence they would cheerfully yield the greater proportion of the meat and hides to the white family. Then, to the great delight of William, he announced that he would accompany him to the mansion, and abide there as a guest while his young men were at their work.

La-u-na understood it all when she saw William and Red Eagle depart together from the rest and ride towards the pass at the head of the valley. When they descended from the hill and disappeared from sight, she beheld the dispersion of the band of hunters, who prepared immediately to execute the work assigned them.

Soon after, the great chief and William were seen approaching the main entrance of the palisaded enclosure, and La-u-na descended from the tower and requested Glenn to go out and meet them. He did so with alacrity, and welcomed the chief with the hospitality so congenial to his nature.

Red Eagle was conducted into the house, and embraced La-u-na. He was surrounded by the family, and even the children evince their delight at seeing him again.

His carriage was graceful and dignified, and his features noble in expression. Mr. Roughgrove and Glenn remarked that he did not exhibit the looks of wonder and curiosity so generally observable in ordinary Indians upon entering the dwellings of the white people. His form was symmetry itself, and his face a model of manly beauty. He smiled benignantly on the children, and accepted with condescension and politeness the refreshments Mars set before him.

Then, while William acted as his interpreter, he said that he had visited the White Spirit after the fall of the Apache spy, and communicated to him the fact of the discharge of the arrow—a declaration of war—before the gun was fired. Then the White Spirit had consulted the Great Spirit over all the earth, and over all the hunting ground of the future existence; and announced that it was his will and pleasure that the king of the Camanches should be in friendship and alliance with the white people who had taken up their abode in the valley. And if war should be preferred to

peace, he was permitted to fight wherever the whites might be assailed by their enemies.

Here Mr. Roughgrove interposed the remark that the whites referred peace.

"Joe," said Sneak, "I'm afeared it'll be peace."

"So am I, too," said Joe. "I'm keen for war with the Apaches; and I killed one of 'em—and that's more than you can say. I'm glad I spilt the first blood."

"Silence!" said Roughgrove, "and learn that it is an offense to utter a word while a great chief is speaking. Proceed, William."

William continued, rendering the words of Red Eagle, who said there was only one alternative—only one means of averting the war—which was to surrender the man who slew the Apache, to be unhawked and scalped.

"Oh, goodness gracious!" cried Joe, springing to his feet, and forgetful both of the rule just mentioned, and the boast he had so recently uttered—"Oh, Mr. Roughgrove," he continued, "I will take my solemn Bible oath the gun went off accidentally—and it is Sneak's fault—he made the trigger go so easy, it was the jar that set it off. Oh, don't give me up to 'em."

The chief, when informed of the nature of Joe's case, smiled, and directed William to say it made no sort of difference whether the killing of the Apache was the result of design or accident—to appease the family of the spy it was necessary for the one in whose hands the gun was held to be delivered up for sacrifice.

"Oh, Mr. Red Eagle," cried Joe, falling on his knees before the chief, "don't let 'em make peace, and I'll fight as bravely as any man in the world."

"You be dod rot!" said Sneak, contemptuously. "I don't want peace, but I'd take it, jest to see you scalped."

"Be silent, Sneak," said Roughgrove. "It is a matter for grave consideration. But, it seems to me, man of peace as I am, that whether the shot was fired accidentally or not, Joe was guarding our lives and property, and had been aimed at with an intent to kill the Indian. Therefore—and I am reluctant to pronounce it—

it is my opinion—be the consequences what they may—we cannot justly deliver up Joe to the Apaches.”

“Good!” cried Joe. “Now I’ll kill a hundred of ’em.”

William informed Joe that Red Eagle was surprised at the conduct of the white chief who had slain a grizzly bear; because, among the Camanches, the man who killed another was always *anxious* to be delivered up, so that his people might be saved from the horrors of war. And thus, by the loss of one life, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, might be saved. Such voluntary sacrifices were always made or offered by brave men—and a coward even the children and dogs despised.

“Oh, Lord!” said Joe, “if there’s war, all parties will be against me; and if there’s peace, I’m to be tomahawked. Please, Mr. William, don’t tell him I don’t want to be given up.”

“It matters very little, Joe,” said Glenn. “what you want or don’t want. This is one of the matters to be decided in council. It must be put to the vote. You will be entitled to vote—provided you are in favor of being delivered up to the Apaches—”

“But I aint, Mr. Glenn—I aint—I’ll swear—”

“Oh, you need’nt swear to it,” said Glenn; “among Indians there are no such things as oaths—they are altogether different from the whites. I thought you knew that, Joe. Go, now, and prepare for your fate, whatever that may be. To-morrow, or next day, a runner must be sent to the Apaches, announcing our determination. This necessity might have been obviated if the companion of the Indian you killed had succeeded in killing you on the same night. The arrow that grazed the head of Cæsar was meant for you—”

“Oh, Lord!” cried Joe. “But he would’nt have known the difference.”

“No—if Cæsar had fallen, it might have been the salvation of this Republic—and no doubt Cæsar would have cheerfully given his life to save yours, and mine, and the lives of the children. He would have been proud to do it. And the Apaches might never have known it was Joe, and not Cæsar, who had done the wrong. Go, and prepare yourself for the ordeal that awaits you.”

Joe, who had approached the door by degrees, now vanished.

"What's the matter, Misther Back?" said Biddy, who met him in the broad hall. "You're waaping, aint you?"

"Biddy," said he, "won't you help save my life?"

"Yes—Oeh, what is it?"

"The cursed Indians demand my life for the one I killed by accident."

"Accident! And was it only a accident after all, Misther Back? I thought you was the bravest man—"

"Hush, Biddy," said he, "you know a man killed by accident is'n't murdered. When I'm cleared I'll tell you more about it.

And Biddy, you can help to clear me. It's to be put to the vote.

And when I'm free, Biddy, I'll be a hero in the war, and then I'll marry you."

"But then I won't have anything to do wid a coward, Misther Back. There'd be no war, if you was brave enough to give yer-self up."

"But then there would be no Joe to marry you, Biddy. Won't you vote to save my life?"

"Oeh, Misther Back, I'd scorn to vote to take yer life, if you won't give it up yerself."

"Thank you, Biddy."

Joe ran to the kitchen—but was told Cæsar, and Pompey, and Hannibal, were at the stables and sheds attending to the animals. He found them standing over the grave of the Indian—and somehow or other the feat of Joe had become known throughout the entire household. This fact, which was hugely enjoyed by Joe, before the arrival of Red Eagle, was now the terror of his life.

"Massa Joe," said Pompey, "you is de brave man—we's found you out. De spades was full ob fresh dirt, and den we found whar de grass had been cut, and den we dug down to de moccasin—and den—"

"Oh, Pompey," said Joe, with tears, "my grave's to be dug next."

He then related his case, while the eyes of the negroes winked

and blinked, and his appeal to them for their votes was so earnest and so eloquent, that they pronounced unanimously in his favor.

"Dod rot it!" cried Sneak, joining them just in time to hear the last words; "you niggers mus'nt make up your minds till you hear my great speech in the council room. And nobody must say beforehand how he's going to vote. That's the law. And it's the meanest and the cowardliest thing in the world for Joe to be electioneering among the niggers to vote on his side. 'Taint fair, Joe, and I've a half a mind to take the stump agin you."

"But, Sneak," said Joe, "my life's in danger—and it's my duty to struggle to save my own life."

"Do'nt believe him, niggers; it's no duty at all. If he gets clear, maybe your lives, and my life, and all the lives of the family may be taken."

"Dar 'tis! I see it now," said Pompey.

"I begins to see sumfing, too," said Caesar.

"Oh, my gracious!" cried Joe; "everybody's hand 'll be against me. Sneak, I thought you was a friend."

"So I am, Joe; but, dod rot it, you would'nt have all your friends to die, would you, to save your life?"

"No, Sneak—but we can whip the Indians."

"You're mighty brave now, Joe."

"I'll be as brave as Caesar, Sneak."

"Hear dat, Pompey?" said Caesar.

"I hear, but 'taint you he meant," said Pompey.

"Ef I did'nt think you was a coward, Joe," said Sneak, "I'd vote agin your bein' sculped. Now you see a coward's always in more danger than a brave man; and you are the only Irishman I ever saw who was a coward. But I 'spect you aint a full blood."

"Sneak, come aside with me," said Joe, with an emphatic gesture. "Now, Sneak," he continued, "don't be making a joke of so serious a matter, for it's life or death. Don't you see the valley's full of Camanches, skinning and drying buffalo meat? Who knows, when they get done, that they won't take me off to the Apaches, if it's believed a majority of our people's in favor of giving me

"I don't know it, Joe, for one; and if I vote to have no war, and to save the lives of the rest of us, dod rot it, it's the very thing I want."

"Hear me, Sneak—if you come on my side I'll give up Biddy."

"You will?"

"Hanged if I don't."

"But 'taint fair," said Sneak. "Ef they was to sculp you, you'd have to gin her up any how."

"Sneak, Mr. Roughgrove's on my side, and all the ladies, of course—and just think, if they clear me, what a pitiful and popular man I'll be."

"That's so. You'll gin her up for my vote?"

"Your vote and your influence. You know, Sneak, how greedy you are for war—"

"Starvin! I'm achin all over to be at the snarvilerous savages. It's a bargain, Joe—I'll go and 'lectioneer for you. Now, you niggers," said he, as he passed by them, "must keep quiet. They won't let you vote agin a white man, and they had'nt ought to."

"Dar 'tis," said Pompey.

"I 'spected as much," said Cæsar. "But all's right—dey knows best."

"Dat's colored people's equality," said Hannibal.

"You hush," said Pompey, "you's nuffin but a molatto."

Sneak led the way, Joe following, to where Mr. Roughgrove, Glenn and William were now standing, examining the place where the Indian had mounted to the summit of the palisade, his head enveloped in the skin of a skunk. William was explaining some of the infinite variety of devices resorted to by the children of the forest to compass their ends. He said there could be no doubt the Apache had ascertained the fate of his companion, for blood had flowed from the wound on the grass.

In the house La-u-na was left alone with her uncle, who seemed fond of her.

"Daughter of my sister," said he, "you were the gayest and prettiest of all the children of the wild-wood—and now you are as

beautiful as ever in the house of the white man. Are you happy?"

"Oh, yes, brother of my mother," said La-u-na, "the Young Eagle is ever kind to me."

"But, Trembling Fawn, do you never sigh for the running brooks, the silent forest, the singing birds, and the warm sunshine of your early haunts?"

"Red Eagle," said La-u-na, "the dancing waters of the laughing brooks run round me here, and the birds sing in the forest in view of my window. Behold now the bright and glorious sunshine streaming upon us. No, uncle—I can never sigh for anything when my husband is near, and the voice of my dear little boy is sounding in my ears. They are the sunlight and the music of my existence—I ask no more—nothing better—until we all shall meet again in the happy hunting grounds which are to last forever."

"La-u-na," said he, "I would not have you leave your husband and your child; but if it should ever be your lot to wander an outcast from the lodges of the white people—come to me—come to Red Eagle—and he will swoop down upon them. He can command many thousands of warriors, and he can pursue his enemies from the mountains to the sea."

"Uncle, the white people will not be your enemies."

"I know the good will not; and the White Spirit says these with whom you live are good. And I would be good. But bad makes bad—and there are many bad people among the whites. La-u-na, your father was a French Colonel—a brave man—and once a terror to the Apaches—but they killed him."

"Uncle, I never knew this before. But they told me in the country of the whites, where there are no Indians, that one of my parents must have been of the race who came from beyond the broad water. I never saw my father—and he was killed?"

"By the Apaches. And that is the reason I have made war on them. More than a thousand warriors have died for that act. But enough. I go to the mountain. When the wolves of the South are prowling in the valley, the Red Eagle will come again, like the ravens, to pick their bones. Farewell!"

Soon after the tall chief strode through the area towards the men at the palisade, while the little negroes were peeping at him from the door of the kitchen. Then, after a brief adieu, he mounted his steed, bearing a rifle, which Glenn had given him, and rode briskly away to the head of the valley, where some of his principal chiefs awaited him.

During the remainder of the day the party of Camanche hunters prepared and divided the meat and the robes of the buffalo—more than a hundred having perished—to the entire satisfaction of the inhabitants of the mansion. Then, after receiving some slight but valued mementoes from the hands of Glenn, they departed upon the trail of the game they had been previously pursuing.

The council, to decide the fate of Joe, was indefinitely postponed, much to his satisfaction; and before night he was devising means to evade his contract with Sneak, who, however, more than once intimated an intention to hold him to the bargain.

CHAPTER X.

EXPLORATION OF THE WHITE SPIRIT'S CAVE—THE WHITE SPIRIT—THE MONK'S CHAPEL.

For several weeks after the departure of the Camanches, tranquility reigned in the valley. Not an Indian was seen, and both William and La-u-na, who made several reconnoissances, were of the opinion that even the Apache spy had taken his departure. The buck-wheat was gathered, and the corn, which had been slightly touched by the frost, was cut and secured within the enclosure—and several stacks of hay were made of the wild grass, for the cattle, in the event of a siege. The crop of potatoes was an extraordinary one—the tubers being quadruple the size of those planted, and the yield an hundred fold.

It was on one of the bright and holy Sunday mornings which almost invariably dawned in resplendent glory at that season of the year, that it was determined to make the often desired exploration of the White Spirit's cave. All the family, except Sneak and the slaves, were of the party. Torches and lamps had been provided for the occasion by Glenn in his laboratory—the largest to be borne by Joe, who desired the honor of preceding the rest of the bearers. His motive for this was a most desperate determination to render himself useful, in fear of a revival of the question of peace or war with the Apaches, so that he might have additional claims on the protection of the family in whose hands the issues, so far as he was personally concerned, reposed. Joe's Pete was again confined at home, and the other Pete, as usual, was found standing at the mouth of the cave.

"Pete," cried Charley.

The little dog wagged his tail, licked his lips, and otherwise manifested a friendly disposition as the party paused at the en-

trance. Even his repugnance to Joe was forgotten or repressed, and he wagged a welcome to him.

"Come here, Mr. Phantom Pete," said Joe, stooping down, "and I'll forgive you."

The little dog, with unhesitating confidence, came and rubbed his head against Joe's hand.

"He's younger than my 'Pete,'" said Joe, "and that's all the difference between them. They're the same color, the same size, and wag their tails exactly alike."

The little dog ran to each of the visitors in turn, and after receiving a caress from them, vanished with rapidity in the cave.

"I suppose he's gone to apprise the White Spirit of our approach," said Glenn, in reply to the wondering interrogatories of the children.

"And I'm glad he made friends with me before he went," said Joe, "because his mouth was the only thing I feared in the cave. I'll be as bold as a lion, now," said he, aside to Biddy.

The entrance to the cave, or rather its vestibule, was spacious enough to have sheltered a hundred men, for the overshadowing rock would have completely protected them against wind and weather. But the second entrance was much smaller, round and smooth, like the pipe of a funnel.

"Let me go first," said Joe, leading the way, and striding forward boldly.

The light enabled them to avoid the water which ran down on either side. But the passage continued to diminish in size, and they were soon compelled to stoop down to avoid striking their heads against the roof, which, however, was smooth and even. They progressed in this manner several minutes in profound silence, Joe all the time keeping a very careful watch in front.

"Here's a change, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, at length, stumbling slightly and falling on one knee.

"I see it," said Glenn, who followed behind.

"But I'm up again," said Joe, "and the ceiling's high enough here."

He had been obstructed by a rock, which rose some eight inches before him, transversing the path, and on either side of which the water spouted down, with a gurgling sound.

"You must all stoop still lower," said Joe, "and make a step up, and then you'll be in a wider and higher place. I'll hold up my big torch so you can see."

When the obstruction was surmounted, they found themselves in a passage very different from that they had just traversed. The concentration of all the lights enabled them to perceive they were in what seemed to be quite a commodious hall. Its width was now not less than twenty feet, and the floor, perfectly level, was covered with dry, white sand. On the right, flowed the hot water, and on the left, the cold, in deep, narrow channels, cut against the walls, apparently with the design of keeping them asunder. The walls were perpendicular, and nearly smooth, and the ceiling, some ten feet in height, was flat and almost white. But the most remarkable object was a stalactite pendule near the entrance from the narrow passage, which glittered in the light of the torches and lamps.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed Mary.

"It resembles a chandelier," said Mr. Roughgrove, "in the hall of a palace."

"Lead on, Joe," said Glenn, "I am impatient to see further."

"I will, sir," said Joe, striding forward; "and I'll go straight on, if you've no objection; but I'd be bothered to know which way to travel if I was by myself, for here's three roads. I see the other Pete right ahead, and I'm thinking he knows best where to lead us."

"Follow the dog," said William.

At what appeared to be the end of the hall, for its width was suddenly contracted, there were two oval and smooth apertures opposite each other, both dry, and smaller than the passage. Joe held his torch at their entrances, but could not penetrate their recesses in the closing obscurity. They seemed to be perfectly

"And now the dog's gone," said Joe, as he progressed in his original direction, through a narrow but lofty passage, the cold water still flowing on one side and the hot on the other, until he was confronted by a large smooth stone, which rose directly in front and seemed to terminate the way. "Here's the end of the journey, I'm thinking," said he, pausing abruptly; "and it is'n't much of a cave, after all. But where the dog vanished to, is a puzzle to me. He may be only a shadow, though. No—here's a narrow, hidden door, to the left, and the way to get round the rock."

"Stop, Joe," cried Glenn. "Hold up your torch. What is that?"

He beheld on the upper part of the rock the figures 1550, deeply and distinctly cut.

"That was done by no Indian," said Mr. Roughgrove, after gazing some moments in silence.

"And there's a cross under it," said little Juliet.

"There is," continued Mr. Roughgrove, when the glare of the lights was concentrated on the surface. "It is defaced by time, and by the scales which have fallen away; but, nevertheless, it is a cross, the symbol of our holy religion—and it was carved by human hands. Could it have been done in the year of our Lord, 1550?"

"Why not?" said Glenn. "We are here much nearer the Spanish dominions than the settled places of our own country. I do not suppose it is more than a few hundred miles from hence to the church at Sante Fe. The Spanish monks, nearly three hundred years ago, had erected monasteries even on the shores of the Pacific ocean, and quite as far north as this; and it is said on what is supposed to be good authority, that immense treasures in gold and precious stones have been sent by them from such remote places to Madrid and to Rome. They may have come hither at as early a day as the middle of the sixteenth century."

"It may be so," said Mr. Roughgrove. "And if so, such a refuge as this would be likely to attract their attention. I shall not be surprised to find further traces of them before we leave the cave."

"That explains the stump we discovered in the valley," said William, who had hitherto remained a silent, but not an unmoved spectator.

In excavating for the foundation of the house, the stump of a very large tree had been discovered, indicating that the valley had once been heavily timbered. There seemed to be the marks of an axe on the stump, which arrested their attention at the time—but it appeared so improbable that such an instrument had ever been used in such a locality, that the idea was summarily dismissed.

"Come on," said Joe, "I see the shadow again, at least his tail, and we've got to stoop again."

This time they were obliged to stoop very low, and turn a sharp angle, which might have deterred less determined explorers from prosecuting the expedition any further. Indeed, the ladies proposed to turn back—and their reluctance to proceed was only overcome by the persuasions of Roughgrove, impelled by the inspiration imparted by the cross.

The next moment, as he turned the angle, Joe's torch vanished from sight, and the children called aloud to him, supposing his light to have been extinguished.

"No, it's not out," said Joe, re-appearing with it. "I've only got into a new part of the house, and the biggest we've seen yet. This must be the parlor, I think; but I don't see any end to it—and the other Pete is no where. I hope the little rascal aint going to lose us—for I'm doubtful whether I could ever find the way back."

By the time Joe was done speaking, the entire party had turned the angle, and emerged into the place he had attempted to describe.

It was an apartment of immense dimensions. It was circular in form, with smooth walls, and the ceiling rose on all sides from the extremities, to a common centre, resembling the interior of a dome. The space was more than a hundred feet in diameter, and might have contained a thousand men. Stalactic formations were numerous, like huge crystal columns, supporting the roof or ceiling; and

near the walls gurgled the transparent waters—on one side hot and smoking, and on the other pure and cold.

"This, indeed, is wonderful," said Mr. Roughgrove; "and here another cross of gigantic dimensions."

It was of stalactite, and had evidently been hewn into the form of a cross.

"That, too," said Glenn, "is the work of human hands."

Biddy, much to the disgust of Joe, although he had been a Romanist, fell down on her knees before the image of the Saviour carved on the cross. Being left alone in that attitude, she rose sickly, however, and followed the rest.

"And there's a great ash pile," said Joe, who wandered towards the centre.

"I know what that means," said William. "Joe, run your staff to it."

"Oh, Mr. William," cried Joe, springing back; "it's a living bed of embers. It's all aglow of fire, covered just a little with the white ashes. And I see some smoke coming up. I smell it, too. Mr. Glenn," he continued, "there's been some body here before us as sure as I'm living."

"It is the council fire," said La-u-na.

"Yes, continued William, "and it is kept burning from year to year, until the peace is broken between all the great nations. Here where they meet—but the White Spirit, whom Red Eagle said we should see face to face, is not present."

"And, Mr. William," said Joe, "I'm glad, for one, he told you the lie. I don't want to see a spirit; I don't care for flesh and blood—but I'm afraid of ghosts."

"Joe," said La-u-na, reproachfully, "Red Eagle never told a lie in his life. What ever he promises is sure to come to pass."

"Goodness! then we've got to see the Spirit. But maybe the dog's the White Spirit?"

"The dog is brown, Joe," said Mary, smiling.

"So he is—but he must belong to the White Spirit," said Joe; "and maybe, since I've made friends with the dog, his master won't be mad at me."

"There is the seat of the White Spirit," said Glenn, holding a lamp before a niche in a stalactite column, which seemed to have been chiseled for the occupancy of the presiding genius at the councils.

"And I'm thankful it's empty," said Joe.

"I'm not," said Charley, "are you, Jule?"

"No," said she. "I would like to see him, because grandpa says he would'n't hurt us."

"Let us go on," said William; "I believe from what the great chief said, we will see the White Spirit."

"I'm sure I'm no more afraid than the rest," said Joe; "but, Mr. William, as the chief didn't give me any instructions, maybe you'd be so good as to lead the way."

"No," said La-u-na, "he must not leave me."

"And Biddy don't want me to leave her," said Joe.

"Och, Misther Back," said Biddy, all eyes being turned on her, "I niver said ony sich thing."

"You didn't?" said Joe; "then I was mistaken. But, Mr. Glenn, which way must I go? Every thing seems round in this room, and there isn't any straight road to travel."

"Go round the wall," said Glenn, smiling, while Mary clung to his arm. "You can't suppose the way out of this place is in the centre."

Joe, thus circumvented, had no alternative but to proceed round the wall by the running brook. The side he chose was near the channel of the smoking water, and he proceeded slowly, if not reluctantly. At length he paused so abruptly that the whole party were precipitated against each other in a rather startling collision.

"What's the matter?" asked Glenn.

"The thought struck me, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, "that there might be danger in going any further. This water is boiling hot, and we must be close to the fire under the earth which boils it. Suppose we should fall into a burning lake, and all be killed?"

"Murther," cried Biddy, "let me out! I want to lave this place."

"The crosses will save you, Biddy," said Glenn. "Don't you see them on the walls?" A great number of them were now easily perceptible. "And Joe," he continued, "don't delay us with any of your nonsense. Keep your torch in advance, and you will step into no burning lake without first seeing it. Then, if you choose to step in, we will not follow you."

"Och!" said Biddy, "I wouldn't do it to save his life."

"But, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, "it's getting hotter and hotter every minute. The perspiration's standing out in great big drops on my face and on my hands, and I don't believe there's a dry thread on my back."

"Have you just discovered that, Joe?" asked Mr. Roughgrove. "I observed the change of temperature as soon as we entered the cave, and your face then was covered with drops of perspiration, just like the faces of all the party."

"That's true," said Joe, looking round, "I'll go now. I see Pete again, and his tail wags more lively than ever."

Pete disappeared again, however, and in such an unceremonious manner, that Joe was struck with astonishment.

"It's a mystery to me," said he, pausing before one of the plates of mica, which they now met with in abundance.

"What's a mystery, Joe?" asked Glenn.

"How that little dog vanished," said Joe. "I kept my eye on him, so's not to let him escape without seeing where he went, and now he's gone."

"Then you did not keep your eye on him."

"I'll take my oath I did; that's to say, I did till he disappeared through the wall—or the isinglass—which is the same thing."

"Hold up your light and see if the mica is transparent."

"I can't see through it, sir," said Joe; "but on my word and honor, it moved when I touched it—but it's a cater-cornered slab, and can't be a door."

"That's a good reason why it should be one," said Glenn, stepping forward and examining it closely. It seemed, however, to be embedded in the rocky wall, like the other. "Where was the dog, Joe, when you saw it last?"

"It was down there, sir," said he, pointing to the lower end of the mass of mica, "with his nose just here," he continued, stooping down, "and he was rooting with it at this crack—my gracious!" he exclaimed, starting back, and almost prostrating Biddy, who was just behind him.

"What's the matter?" asked Glenn.

"The baste's a'most broke me tooth, sir," said Biddy.

"I felt something click, sir," said Joe, "and it moved again."

"Try it once more, Joe," said Glenn.

"I'd rather not, sir," said Joe, "it may be a rattle-snake, or the teeth of the dog, or a trap to catch me."

"Then I will," said Glenn.

By the slightest exertion the mica was moved, being suspended on hidden hinges. It might have been left ajar, and hence had yielded to the dog.

"It is a secret door," said Glenn. "Go on, Joe."

"Please, sir, it's so narrow," said Joe, "let me go behind—two can't go abreast."

"I know that," said Glenn; "but why not go foremost? Are you frightened?"

"Oh, no," said Joe; "but I'm uneasy about getting back again. I couldn't find the way out to save my life."

"Never mind that," said Glenn; "I shall know the way. Go on with your torch, Joe, I will be close at hand. But this is not the work of nature," he continued, gazing at the symmetry of the walls and the regular arch of the narrow passage through which they were passing.

The rest crowded close after—but they had not proceeded many paces before they were brought to a sudden halt by Joe, who forcibly blocked up the way.

"What's the matter, now?" asked Glenn.

"I see daylight ahead, sir," said Joe.

"Well—are you frightened at that?"

"No, sir; but it's the blessed sun."

"Very well, why do you stop to tell us?"

"I thought I'd just tell it, sir, to prepare the rest for it."

"They'll be prepared for it, and thankful for it, too. Go on, Joe."

When the party emerged from the narrow passage, they stood, amazed, in a little Gothic chapel, the eastern end decorated with a magnificent window, through which the golden sun was streaming. The Saviour and the Madonna were painted on it in brilliant colors, whose hues were reflected on the altar and across the chancel. The altar, of white marble, was surmounted with a cross and candlesticks, and the chancel was separated from the body of the chapel by an open screen of stalactites. In front and on the left, was a pulpit, and on the right the lectern. There were a few benches and chairs, and upon these the astonished explorers sank in silence, and gazed in wonder. The ceiling was vaulted, the windows painted, and every thing bore the aspect of a well constructed edifice, sanctified by the lapse of many generations.

"My children," said Mr. Roughgrove, "this is the house of God, and He has conducted us hither. The pious men who constructed it, have long since departed from the scenes of earth, and it may be that the sounds of praise and prayer have not been heard in it for centuries. But with God there is no lapse of time; and His ear is ever open to the worship of the sincere of heart. We have brought hither our prayer books, proposing to read the service in one of the rude places described by the Indian chief to William, but we have found a more fitting place than we anticipated."

His desire was instinctively responded to, and all stood up or kneeled down, as the order of the service indicated; and never were the prayers or the confession of faith more devoutly uttered than in that lonely spot in the wilderness. And when, at last, the hymn was sung, with feeling devotion, every part of the chapel was filled with the seraphic sounds, while a halo of inspiration seemed to settle upon the worshippers as the glorious sunlight poured in upon them.

At the conclusion of the hymn, Mr. Roughgrove stepped forward towards the pulpit with an intention of uttering some of the words that seemed to suggest themselves as fitting on such an occasion,

and the remainder of the party resumed their seats. But the minister, after advancing a few steps, paused very suddenly, and lifted both hands, as his eyes rested upon a man, of low stature, sitting in a carved chair beside the altar, which was now visible from his position through the open screen between the chancel and the auditorium. He sat there in sacerdotal garments, with a crosier beside him. The hair on his head, and the beard which reached down to his breast, were as white as driven snow; his face was exceedingly pale, and wore a thoughtful but beneficent cast of expression.

As Mr. Roughgrove stood, rooted to the spot, his face being away, the little congregation supposed him to be engaged in mute supplication; but the occupant of the bishop's throne lifted his hand and beckoned him to approach. He did so, and as he drew nearer, his step was accelerated, and the bishop, who had not yet been seen by the rest, rose to meet him. Their arms were clasped round each other's necks a moment after.

"Jaspar," said the bishop.

"My lord," responded Mr. Roughgrove.

"I heard two voices, Mr. Glenn," whispered Joe, trembling in every limb.

"Sit still and be silent," said Glenn, "no matter what you may hear or see." And he whispered the same thing to the rest, for he too had heard the voice of the stranger, uttering the name of the minister.

In the space of a very few moments Mr. Roughgrove was seen returning, and it was supposed he would then ascend the pulpit; but instead of this, he joined the little wondering party, and informed them in a low voice that the bishop would preach.

Then, as all eyes were turned towards the altar, the white haired and white robed bishop came forth slowly, but with dignity, and yet with humility in every step.

Joe crouched down and extinguished his torch. His eyes and mouth were very wide open, and he hid himself under one of the benches. The children seemed less astonished than the rest, for they had been accustomed to seeing the bishop in the church they

attended in Virginia, and the remoteness of the locality they were in was forgotten.

The bishop ascended the stairway and stood in the pulpit; and after bowing his head a moment in prayer, he opened the Bible and read a passage appropriate to the place and the occasion. In the progress of his remarks he said :

“God is every where. For him there are no distances, no obscurities, nothing hidden. The lone mariner, cast adrift on the wide waste of the ocean, or the wanderer in the solitary places of the wilderness, are still in view of Him, and He hears all their petitions. And the solitary places are exempt from many of the sinful contaminations of man, and hence are purer and more holy in the sight of God and His angels. And pure men may be separated from their erring brethren—may withdraw themselves from association with an unappreciating or detracting world, without incurring the displeasure of the great Creator. But they may not despise their kind, nor cease to pray for them; and prayer availeth as much in the wilderness as in the teeming city. We pray to the Omnipotent for the conversion of the world. We can do nothing but pray; but the Omnipotent can do all things, and it may be His good pleasure to grant the things we ask. And if we pray for our enemies when thus separated from them, He will be witness that our supplications are sincere, and He may turn their hearts. In former times, prayer and fasting in the wilderness were acceptable to Him—and He is unchangeable in His nature. Existence is a great mystery. It is God’s mystery, profound and inappreciable as His own will and pleasure. To a man of little faith, it may seem incredible that our prayers, in this remote quarter of the earth, can redound to the benefit of our fellow creatures. But who creates the secret thoughts of man. God alone inspires and directs them—and these lead to action, and action shapes the affairs of this existence. Then, if God hears our supplications and grants our petitions, He will inspire the thoughts that lead to good acts, for His own honor and glory. And the good and evil of existence are not always comprehended. From apparent calamities good is often evolved, and from seeming blessings great calamities ensue. God alone is perfectly

good. He created us, and will save us, if we have faith in Christ Jesus, who died for us, and continue in obedience to His commands. We can do nothing ourselves, because we pass away; but He alone may enable us to pass into that better world where life is eternal, and where sorrow cannot come."

At the conclusion of his discourse, the venerable man uttered an impressive benediction, and descended from the pulpit.

"Grandpa," said Juliet, "don't let him go—don't let the bishop go."

"No, grandpa," said little Charles, "he's the good bishop, and if he goes, maybe we won't see him any more."

"Oh, Mr. Glenn," said Joe, rising from his hiding place, and coming forward noiselessly, "let's run. He's the White Spirit. He isn't a man at all. He's the wizard we once saw on the island in your dream."

"Be silent, Joe," said Glenn.

"No wonder all the tribes reverence him," said William, who had been silent and thoughtful. Mary and La-u-na clung to each other, lost in amazement and admiration.

"Remain till I return," said Mr. Roughgrove, rising and going forward through the trellised gate of the stalactite screen. The bishop awaited him, and grasping his hand, led him through a narrow door into an adjoining room.

During the absence of Mr. Roughgrove the rest wandered about in the chapel examining various objects of curiosity. From the many inscriptions and paintings found on the walls, and above all, the letters on several tablets, it was certain that the cave had been the abode of monks at an early date of the settlement of the continent by Europeans. They had wandered thither from the Spanish provinces, and in process of time had fashioned the chapel, which was lighted by the sun shining through the mica, seen by the party, in the chasm. The number of monks who had participated in the construction, could only be matter for conjecture; but if they were few in number, it was evident they must have been a long time engaged in a work of such magnitude and finish.

In front of the altar were a number of slabs, whose inscriptions seemed to elucidate the subject in some measure.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Joe, leaping away from one of them, "there's a raw head and bloody bones on this one."

"That was carved, Joe," said Glenn, "before your great grandfather was born."

It bore the date of 1565.

"And I almost wish he had never been born at all," said Joe; "then I wouldn't be way out here, under-ground, with the dead bones, and wizards and spirits."

"I'm not going to be frightened," said Biddy, "if there's only sure enough praasts. Och, and here's a urn for howly wather—and there's wather in it," and she dipped her finger and crossed herself.

"Don't Biddy," exclaimed Joe; "you don't know what kind of water that is. Look there—a frog's in it—and who knows the water has'n't been there two thousand years?"

"It is a baptismal font," said Mary. "But why should it have been placed here?"

"Thousands of Indians have been baptised," said William, "and thousands of them have crosses suspended from their necks. There are more Christians among them than the white people have any idea of."

"But some of 'em are mighty bad Christians," said Joe. "The old Indian that pulled my hair out in Missouri, and was going to burn me alive, had a cross on, and they say he's a prophet now."

"But, Joe," said La-u-na, "the books I learned to read first, narrated the burning of women and children, and even English bishops, by the Catholic Christians."

"That is true, La-u-na," said Glenn. "Among those who call themselves Christians, deeds of cruelty and terror abound, as well as among the savages in the wilderness. You read of the dreadful deeds done in Paris only a few years ago. There the Catholics were murdered or expelled, and the despicable mob even marched into one of the churches and performed what they called the cere-

mony of dethroning God. And that, too, in the chief city of one of the most civilized and polished nations of Europe."

"So you see, Joe," said William, "we have better society here in the wilderness, and perhaps greater safety, than we might enjoy nearer to the Pope in the old country."

"My children," said Mr. Roughgrove, returning with a benignant expression on his countenance, "come, let me conduct you to the bishop."

"Is he really a bishop?" asked Glenn.

"Really and truly," said Mr. Roughgrove. "And what is more, he was one of my preceptors in London. He was made a bishop, but was assailed by detraction, and he withdrew, as every one supposed, to Syria—but he came to the western world, and, like myself, abode among the Indians. He is the lord bishop of ———, about whom so much was said in the newspapers; but we must call him simply the bishop. The Indians, you know, call him the White Spirit—and he has been truly a benefactor to them. Come, and he will show you more wonders."

They repaired first to the sacristy, and were affectionately received by the benevolent old man.

"Now follow me, my dear children," said the venerable bishop, after repeatedly kissing little Juliet and Charley, whose hands he still retained while leading the way.

After passing through a small library, consisting principally of ancient tomes of manuscript, they entered a spacious apartment, elaborately ornamented by the patient industry of the monks. The sun came in through the transparent isinglass, and a glow of comfort, and even joyousness, pervaded the bright atmosphere. The floor was strewn with rushes, and there were unique but convenient chairs and settees ranged round the walls. There was a large and handsome table in the centre, of polished marble, permeated with veins of virgin gold—upon which was a lute, and beside it a harp.

But the things which had the greatest attraction for the ladies and children, were the flowers and the fruits ranged on the side of

the room, where the sun found his rays through the translucent mica.

"Mother! father!" cried the children, running thither. "See the pears, the apples, the peaches, the plums, the figs, the lemons, the oranges, the grapes!" And at each exclamation they clapped their hands or leaped up with delight.

"Pluck them and eat them, my dear children," said the bishop; "if this be not a Paradise, neither are they forbidden fruits. And they are delicious. I found them here, neglected, for their original proprietor had long been dead; but my knowledge of botany, and some skill in cultivation, sufficed to rescue them from decay and degeneration. God blessed my labor, and turned even my amazement to a substantial benefit."

"And now, William," said Glenn, "we have a solution of the unusual discovery of certain fruits in the woods, and no doubt the superiority of the grapes in the valley is owing to the same cause."

"Doubtless," said the bishop, "it is the result of the experiments of the monks—and I have often had cause to be thankful for their care, for on several occasions these under shelter failed to bear the usual quantity. Let them feast abundantly," he added, seeing their mothers attempting to restrain the children. "They extend through the next room, and the one beyond that—and then on the other side of the chasm, where the sun of the afternoon reaches them, in another suite of apartments, there are other fruits, of different varieties, but not less nutritious—originally wild, but improved astonishingly by careful cultivation. Fear not—I have abundance—abundance for all. And the flowers—pluck them without stint or hesitation. God will give me more. The sunshine and the water will replace them, and increase them a hundred fold. Oh, God! I thank thee for sending hither these dear creatures to rejoice with me for thy bounties."

"Next he exhibited the baths, hot and cold, chiseled in the solid walls by the monks, where the waters flowed perennially; the summer bed rooms, where the refreshing breezes came in at orifices made in the mica above the reach of the venomous reptiles; and

the winter apartments, heated sufficiently by the vicinity of the hot spring. And every where the hand of man had been busy, showing that either a large number of monks must have once inhabited the cave, or else there must necessarily have been an unbroken succession of them for many generations.

As they were returning to the large room, Joe, seeking an opportunity to speak to Glenn, asked him, seriously, if he didn't think it was all a dream.

"Truly it seems very much like one, Joe," said he. "But why do you ask?"

"I want to be sure of it, Mr. Glenn; and if it should turn out to be another dream you're having, like the big one you had in Missouri, I might as well throw this away," and he exhibited a large orange he had plucked.

"I don't see how my dreams can concern you, Joe."

"I didn't think of that. But maybe it's a dream of my own," said Joe.

"Then I don't see how your dreams can concern me, Joe."

"That's so, too," said Joe. "I've bit my finger, and it hurt—and I eat a fig, and it was good—at least it seemed so to me—but still I'm not sure it isn't a dream."

"I don't know how to convince you, Joe," said Glenn. Then turning away, he approached the venerable bishop, and invited him to take up his abode at the mansion.

The bishop smiled benignantly, but declined the offer. On the contrary he proposed that Glenn and his family should abandon the house and dwell with him in the cave. He said that the house was susceptible of a strong defence, but could hardly withstand an attack of the Apaches.

"And do you really think they will make war on us?" asked Glenn.

"I fear it, my son. War is the history of man—the white man as well as the Indian. In that respect we are not less savage than they. The Camanches, in a trial of puissance, might beat the Apaches in this valley. There are chiefs in both nations who will be guided by my counsels, but perhaps not enough of the warriors who

vote in their councils. Blood has been shed—and even the heathen have learned the passage I have so often quoted to them, ‘that he who sheddeth blood by man shall be slain.’ It might be averted—but we will converse further on the subject.”

“Oh, good Mr. White Spirit,” said Joe, who had been an attentive listener; “I mean Mr. Bishop,” he continued, seeing the rebuke expressed by the eye of Mr. Roughgrove, “don’t let ’em give me up to be burnt at the stake.”

“The great chief of the Camanches has sent me a true account of the transaction, my son,” said the bishop, “and I will do all I can to prevent the further effusion of blood.”

Joe fell back, not quite certain that the answer had a hopeful meaning.

When the visitors were about to return, Glenn renewed his invitation, but the recluse was firm in his refusal. He said his character of White Spirit must be maintained to restrain the Indians; and this could be best done in the cave. He was well provided with food, the offerings of dried meat, and of hard bread, which could be softened in the hot water, were always many months in advance of the consumption. He was comfortable, because, having found the written rules for the regulation of the lives of the monks, he had conformed to them, and become accustomed to them, and for thirty years he had enjoyed perfect health. And he informed his hearers that he had discovered many curious manuscripts, and among the rest the diary of the last monk, who had buried himself—and he had inspected his bones. But the water or the atmosphere of the cave seemed to have been conducive to a most extraordinary degree of longevity, for the last monk was aged an hundred years when he died, and several others who preceded him attained the age of four score and ten. It had been more than a century, however, since the last had died, and hence the cave had been a long time uninhabited; but the present generation of Indians did not know it, and believed the White Spirit would never die. He said he would visit Glenn’s mansion occasionally—but they must not expect him ever to be their guest for more than an hour at a time.

NOTE.—Owing to the destruction, by fire, of the Bath Paper Mills near Hamburg, S. C., the Publisher has been disappointed in getting such a quantity of book paper as would justify in publishing the entire work at this time, and therefore, has been compelled to issue it in two volumes, the second of which is now in press and will be out as soon as the necessary supply of paper can be procured.

Hoping the above explanation will be satisfactory, the Publisher asks the indulgence of a generous public while he endeavors to overcome the difficulties of building up home enterprizes.

